Results of an Oncology Clinical Trial Nurse Role Delineation Study

Michelle A. Purdom, PhD, RN, Sandra Petersen, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, GNP-BC, FAANP, and Barbara K. Haas, PhD, RN

The specialty practice of clinical trial nursing was recently recognized by the American Nurses Association (International Association of Clinical Research Nurses [IACRN], 2016). With this recognition came a five-year acknowledgement of clinical trial nurses’ (CTNs’) scope and standards of practice (American Nurses Association & IACRN, 2016). Nomenclature for clinical trial nursing is confusing, and precisely what CTNs do on a day-to-day basis is unclear based on the role title alone. Two nursing roles have been described in the literature—the CTN and the research nurse coordinator. When compared, CTNs were found to perform higher levels of clinical practice than research nurse coordinators (Bevans et al., 2011). The CTN’s role is the provision of direct patient care to study participants, and the research nurse coordinator’s nursing activities were more frequently related to a specific study or principal investigator (Bevans et al., 2011). Although the American Nurses Association stated that CTNs make important contributions to the research process and have specialized training in nursing care—research regulations, scientific processes, participation protection, data collection, analysis, and interpretation (IACRN, 2016)—many questions about their roles and responsibilities remain. This recognition reveals how nurses contribute...