

# Development of a Workshop for Malignant Hematology Nursing Education

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As part of a comprehensive orientation for nurses caring for patients with hematologic malignancies, nurses are expected to attend general corporate orientation immediately followed by hospital site-specific nursing orientation. The orientation is comprised of lectures, e-learning, and clinical observership, as well as clinical practice under supervision of a preceptor. Nurses also are expected to attend foundational courses. The goal of these courses is to consolidate practical and theoretical knowledge in a specific oncology nursing specialty. A workshop was developed that offers a unique vision by interweaving theory, practice, and patient voice.

## At a Glance

- Patients with malignant hematology often require complex care and management.
- Malignant hematology nurses require in-depth disease knowledge.
- Interactive workshops facilitate knowledge uptake.

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**M**alignant hematology (MH), a field of oncology, involves diseases such as leukemia, lymphoma, and multiple myeloma (Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada [LLSC], 2013). In Canada, one person is diagnosed with a blood cancer every 28 minutes (LLSC, 2013). In addition, hematology cancer rates are expected to rise because of the aging population (Cancer Care Ontario [CCO], 2011). An estimated 18,600 people were diagnosed with lymphoma, leukemia, or multiple myeloma in 2013 in Canada, with a projected mortality of 8,650 (LLSC, 2013).

Patients undergoing treatment for a hematologic cancer are prescribed an intensive treatment regimen that requires

complex supportive care to manage prolonged side effects and life-threatening complications (Buckley et al., 2014). Meenaghan, Dowling, and Kelly (2012) recommend that MH nurses focus on minimizing side effects and staying vigilant to potential adverse effects of treatment and disease, in addition to providing supportive and psychosocial care. Therefore, care for these patients must be provided by highly skilled oncology nurses. Prior to becoming experts in the field, nurses must possess a strong foundational knowledge in oncology nursing. Forsetlund et al. (2009) conducted a systematic review of educational workshops and concluded that educational sessions can improve practice and patient

outcomes. Drawing from Forsetlund et al. (2009), the authors developed an educational MH 101 workshop, in which the primary outcome is to assist novice hematology nurses in creating a solid theoretical foundation to enhance the critical knowledge they require to provide high-quality nursing care.

## Background

Princess Margaret Cancer Centre is a large comprehensive cancer treatment facility located in downtown Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Nurses are expected to attend general orientation that is followed immediately by nursing orientation. The general orientation is comprised of information relevant to the University Health Network (2014), and Princess Margaret nursing orientation presents information specific to oncology nursing practice within the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. The orientation components take about 12 weeks to complete and include lectures, e-learning, clinical observership, and clinical practice under supervision of a preceptor. In addition to the previously mentioned orientation, Princess Margaret nurses also are expected to attend foundational courses. These courses focus on gathering knowledge and building clinical skills in the specialty area of oncology nursing. MH, hematopoietic stem cell transplantation, and management of deteriorating patients are examples of foundational courses that hematology nurses are to attend within 24 months of hire. The content is presented by expert advanced practice nurses in the field and includes pathophysiology of MH diseases, clinical presentation, assessment, diagnosis, and symptom management. Participants of previous