

Advanced Practice Issues: Results of the ONS Advanced Practice Nursing Survey

Mary Pat Lynch, CRNP, MSN, AOCN®, Diane G. Cope, PhD, ARNP-CS, AOCN®, and Kathleen Murphy-Ende, RN, PhD, AOCN®

Purpose/Objectives: To ascertain the critical issues in current advanced practice nurse (APN) roles in oncology.

Design: Descriptive.

Setting: National.

Sample: 368 Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) APNs in oncology practice.

Methods: Subjects completed an 11-page self-administered questionnaire comprised of 62 multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Subjects were asked to identify level of importance for ONS to address selected issues in each section.

Main Research Variables: Demographic information and APN issues regarding practice, outcomes, prescriptive authority, reimbursement, education, continuing education, licensure and certification, legislation, and challenges facing oncology APNs.

Findings: The majority of APNs were nurse practitioners working in a hematology/oncology practice in an urban setting providing direct patient care. Priority practice issues were lack of agreement among state boards of nursing related to privileges, lack of understanding of the role by patients and healthcare professionals, and lack of an APN definition. Important APN outcomes were symptom management, quality of life, patient/family satisfaction, and cost of care. Priority educational topics were oncology disease management, pharmacology, advanced physical assessment, and reimbursement. Challenges facing oncology APNs were lack of an APN definition, reimbursement issues, documentation of outcomes, prescriptive authority, variance in education, merging of current roles, certification, loss of cancer specialty, and second licensure.

Conclusions: Numerous APN issues continue to be unresolved. APN outcomes research is needed to validate the oncology APN role in cancer care.

Implications for Nursing Practice: Survey results and specific recommendations have been forwarded to the ONS Steering Council and Board of Directors for implementation decisions.

Key Points . . .

- The Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) Survey was created in May 2000 to ascertain and prioritize the critical issues inherent in APN roles in oncology.
- The survey focused on demographic information and APN issues regarding practice, outcomes, prescriptive authority, reimbursement, education, continuing education, licensure and certification, legislation, and challenges to the role.
- Numerous APN issues continue to be unresolved. Survey results and recommendations were forwarded to the Oncology Nursing Society leadership for implementation.

future ONS projects for this group. The target audience was determined to be APNs, with a larger audience of administrators, educators, legislators, and health policy decision makers.

The project team consisted of three members of the Clinical Nurse Specialist Special Interest Group (SIG) and three members of the Nurse Practitioner SIG. Team members included Mary Pat Lynch, CRNP, MSN, AOCN® (chair), Melissa Craft, RN, MS, AOCN®, Molly Loney, RN, MSN, Diane G. Cope, PhD, ARNP-CS, AOCN®, Carole Heaney, RN, MS, and Kathleen Murphy-Ende, RN, PhD, AOCN®. The team was assisted by ONS staff members Lynne Suhayda, RN, MEd, Linda Eaton, RN, MN, AOCN®, Judy DePalma, PhD, RN, and Jenny Brown.

The project team focused on current APN issues within the framework of the recommendations of the 1994 State of the Knowledge Conference on Advanced Practice in Oncology

Mary Pat Lynch, CRNP, MSN, AOCN®, is an oncology nurse practitioner and an administrator at the Joan Karnell Cancer Center at Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia; Diane G. Cope, PhD, ARNP-CS, AOCN®, is a nurse practitioner at Florida Cancer Specialists in Fort Myers; and Kathleen Murphy-Ende, RN, PhD, AOCN®, is an oncology/palliative care nurse practitioner at the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics and Comprehensive Cancer Center and a clinical assistant professor and associate researcher in the School of Nursing at the University of Wisconsin, all in Madison. (Submitted April 2001. Accepted for publication July 20, 2001.)

The Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) Survey Team was formed by the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) Steering Council in May 2000 to conduct a survey of advanced practice oncology nurses. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain the critical issues inherent in current advanced practice roles in oncology for the purpose of planning