



Advancing Practice and Research: Creating Evidence-Based Summaries on Measuring Nursing-Sensitive Patient Outcomes

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As pressure to improve the quality and safety of healthcare delivery continues, debates have ensued regarding which measures are sensitive to or affected by individual providers, technology, and healthcare systems (Doran, 2003). Outcomes must be identified uniformly and systematically to provide patients and consumers the information they need to make informed choices about their care. Healthcare professionals are obligated to collect patient outcomes data to identify problems with care, evaluate interventions, and improve the quality of care (Donabedian, 1966).

Oncology nurses must document patient outcomes data. In 2003, the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) Steering Council recognized the unique challenges of identifying, measuring, and ultimately improving outcomes for patients with cancer. The ONS Oncology Nursing-Sensitive Outcomes (ONSO) Project Team (see Figure 1) began the important work of describing nursing-sensitive outcomes, defined as “the results directly attributable to nursing care and the provision of nursing services or achieved in collaboration with other healthcare providers” (ONSO Project Team, 2003).

The product of this initial work was a classification scheme for outcomes that are impacted by oncology nurses. Categories included

- Symptom experience
- Functional status
- Safety (preventable adverse events)
- Psychological distress
- Economic.

To reach consensus on key oncology nursing-sensitive outcomes and to develop a five-year plan to educate oncology nurses, the healthcare community, and the public about oncology nursing-sensitive outcomes. A major component of this task is expected to necessitate a commissioned literature review of oncology nursing-sensitive outcomes research. An additional outcome will be the identification of gaps in oncology nursing-sensitive outcomes research and to identify outcomes research goals.

FIGURE 1. ONCOLOGY NURSING-SENSITIVE OUTCOMES PROJECT TEAM CHARGE

Exemplars for each category were identified and included 30 potential outcomes. The project team then launched a plan to develop an online resource as a part of the ONS Evidence-Based Practice Resource Center on the Internet. The purpose of the project was to create evidence-based summaries as a centralized resource regarding the measurement of specific oncology nursing-sensitive outcomes. The summaries focus on evidence supporting nursing-sensitive outcomes and measurement tools for the assessment of each outcome.

From the initial list of outcomes, fatigue, nausea and vomiting, return to usual function, and prevention of infection were selected for the next phase of the ONSO Project Team’s initiatives. Experts in the four outcomes were commissioned to author a summary of each outcome. Following a standardized format for each summary, the authors were asked to

- Provide a clear definition for the outcome.
- Identify and review published integrated reviews and meta-analyses that provide evidence of nursing’s effect on the selected outcome.
- Identify and review published clinical practice guidelines related to the outcome.
- Identify and critique available instruments or tools for measurement.
- Discuss the gaps in published research and measurement techniques.
- Review, synthesize, and critique the evidence identifying the impact of oncology nursing interventions, and provide recommendations for practice, future research, and educational activities.

The Process

As literature reviews were conducted, authors used papers classified as systematic

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