

# Oncology Nurses' Attitudes and Engagement in Nursing Research

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**OBJECTIVES:** To assess nurses' attitudes and perceptions about research.

**SAMPLE & SETTING:** 623 RNs at a National Cancer Institute–designated comprehensive cancer center in the midwestern United States.

**METHODS & VARIABLES:** This study used a cross-sectional, descriptive survey to describe nurses' attitudes toward nursing research, perceptions of the research environment, and research involvement.

**RESULTS:** Nurses' attitudes toward research were generally more positive than negative. Results suggested that the biggest obstacle to nurses participating in research is time.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING:** Understanding oncology nurses' attitudes toward research and the research environment is vital for the future of patient outcomes research. Results from this study inform strategic goals for increasing nursing research capacity, including the use of research teams and access to research mentors and resources, as well as nursing research fellowship programs.

**KEYWORDS** nursing; research; attitudes; perceptions; evidence-based practice; oncology  
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Nursing research is important because it yields clinically relevant evidence to improve the health of individuals, families, and communities. This is particularly true in the field of oncology, where nursing research can affect patient outcomes, from prevention to survivorship to the end of life. However, barriers to nurses' participation in research are found across all settings. To assess nurses' attitudes about and engagement in research at the Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center–Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute in Columbus, a freestanding academic National Cancer Institute (NCI)–designated comprehensive cancer center (CCC), the institution's Nursing Innovation and Research Council chose to assess nurses' attitudes and perceptions concerning research by replicating studies by Rizzuto, Bostrom, Suter, and Chenitz (1994) and Smirnoff, Ramirez, Kooplimae, Gibney, and McEvoy (2007).

## Background

Nurses' involvement in research is crucial, particularly as patient care transitions from interventions based on precedent to those based on the best evidence. Well-developed research and evidence-based practice (EBP) go hand in hand in improving patient outcomes and healthcare delivery. In the 21st century, regulating bodies require that EBP be integrated into nursing curricula (Melnyk & Fineout-Overholt, 2018). Although research creates evidence, EBP is the mechanism that puts evidence into practice. EBP is becoming the new standard of care, and more research is needed to create an ample supply of quality evidence to support this new culture (Melnyk & Fineout-Overholt, 2018).

Studies consistently show that nurses have positive attitudes toward research and agree that they