



# Controlling Malglycemia in Patients Undergoing Treatment for Cancer

Susan Storey, PhD, RN, AOCNS<sup>®</sup>, Veronica J. Brady, PhD, FNP-BC, BCADM, CDE, Ashley Leak Bryant, PhD, RN-BC, OCN<sup>®</sup>, Ellen D. Davis, MS, RN, CDE, FAADE, Marilyn J. Hammer, PhD, DC, RN, Denise Soltow Hershey, PhD, FNPBC, Jill Olausson, MSN, BSN, CDE, and Jane Jeffrie Seley, DNP, MSN, MPH, GNP, BC-ADM, CDE, CDTC, FAAN

Patients with or without preexisting diabetes undergoing treatment for cancer may be at risk for malglycemic events. Malglycemia, particularly hyperglycemia and diabetes in patients with cancer, may lead to adverse outcomes. Prevention, prompt recognition, and early intervention to regulate malglycemia can optimize the effects of cancer treatment, minimize the harmful consequences, and improve quality of life for patients with cancer. The development of evidence-based standards of care and protocols are needed to guide clinical practice when caring for patients with cancer.

## At a Glance

- Malglycemia has been associated with increased risk for adverse patient outcomes.
- Multiple known and unknown factors contribute to the onset of malglycemia.
- Formal guidelines or protocols are needed to best manage malglycemia in patients receiving cancer treatment.

Susan Storey, PhD, RN, AOCNS<sup>®</sup>, is a research scientist in the School of Nursing at Indiana University in Indianapolis; Veronica J. Brady, PhD, FNP-BC, BCADM, CDE, is a nurse practitioner in the Department of Internal Medicine at the University of Nevada in Reno; Ashley Leak Bryant, PhD, RN-BC, OCN<sup>®</sup>, is an assistant professor in the College of Nursing at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill; Ellen D. Davis, MS, RN, CDE, FAADE, is a diabetes clinical nurse specialist at the Duke University Health System in Durham, NC; Marilyn J. Hammer, PhD, DC, RN, is an assistant professor in the College of Nursing at New York University in New York; Denise Soltow Hershey, PhD, FNPBC, is an assistant professor in the College of Nursing at Michigan State University in East Lansing; Jill Olausson, MSN, BSN, CDE, is an assistant professor in the School of Nursing at Azusa Pacific University in California; and Jane Jeffrie Seley, DNP, MSN, MPH, GNP, BC-ADM, CDE, CDTC, FAAN, is a diabetes nurse practitioner in the Weill Cornell Medical Center at New York—Presbyterian Hospital in New York, NY. The authors take full responsibility for the content of the article. The authors did not receive honoraria for this work. No financial relationships relevant to the content of this article have been disclosed by the authors or editorial staff. Mention of specific products and opinions related to those products do not indicate or imply endorsement by the *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing* or the Oncology Nursing Society. Storey can be reached at [sustorey@iu.edu](mailto:sustorey@iu.edu), with copy to editor at [CJONEditor@ons.org](mailto:CJONEditor@ons.org).

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Context should be carefully considered when planning disease management and treatment (Bayliss et al., 2014). Typically, members of the healthcare team are focused on isolated disease management strategies, often failing to consider other pathophysiologic processes that can diminish the effectiveness of those very treatments. Educating members of the healthcare

team regarding the deleterious effects of malglycemia (hyperglycemia, hypoglycemia, and/or glycemic variability) (Hammer et al., 2009) is imperative for the comprehensive care of patients with cancer. Understanding the pathophysiology and subsequent ramifications of malglycemia can result in preemptive assessment, early identification, intervention, and opportunities to educate the patient.

The development of evidence-based standards of care and protocols for the treatment of malglycemia are needed to guide clinical practice when caring for patients with cancer. These best practices can be integrated into patients' individualized treatment plans, thereby mitigating the untoward effects of malglycemia.

## Background

Patients with established diabetes (American Diabetes Association, 2015) are at increased risk for developing certain types of cancers, such as liver, pancreatic, endometrial, colorectal, breast, and bladder cancers (Giovannucci et al., 2010) (see Figure 1). In addition, patients with or without preexisting diabetes undergoing treatment for cancer may be at risk for malglycemic events because of numerous factors, including steroids (Mazali, Lalli, Alves-Filho, & Mazzali, 2008) and certain chemotherapeutic agents (e.g., docetaxel [Taxotere<sup>®</sup>], everolimus [Afinitor<sup>®</sup>], temsirolimus [Torisel<sup>®</sup>], androgen deprivation therapy) (Hershey et al., 2014). In addition, higher body mass index (Roumen, Blaak, & Corpeleijn, 2009), nutritional imbalances (Butler, Btaiche, & Alaniz, 2005), nutritional support, stress (Butler et al., 2005), physical inactivity (Katz, 2007), and older age (Campisi & d'Adda di Fagagna, 2007) are potential contributors. Studies in patients who underwent treatment for hematologic malignancies (Storey & Von Ah, 2012) and, in particular, those who received allogeneic or autologous hematopoietic cell transplantations (Derr, Hsiao, & Saudek, 2008; Fuji et al., 2007; Hammer et al., 2009; Olausson, Hammer,