

Comprehensive Care for Oncology Patients: The Relevance of Nursing Assistance – Integrative Review

Camila Ferreira Nobre ^a, Barbara Costa Proença ^b.

^a Nursing Undergraduate Student, Bahiana School of Medicine and Public Health, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, camilanobre135@gmail.com

^b Nursing Undergraduate Student, Bahiana School of Medicine and Public Health, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, Barbaracosstaa@gmail.com

Abstract. This article discusses the integral care of oncology patients, emphasizing the importance of nursing. The increasing incidence of cancer in Brazil makes the role of nurses essential in prevention, diagnosis, and symptom management. An integrative literature review was conducted using databases such as PubMed, Scielo, and the National Library of Medicine, employing descriptors such as “oncology care” and “oncology nursing.” The study included articles published between 2010 and 2023 in Portuguese and English, while exclusion criteria eliminated studies not available in full text, systematic reviews, and clinical trials. The results indicate that nursing interventions, such as pain management, fatigue alleviation, and emotional support, are crucial for improving the quality of life of oncology patients. Furthermore, the study highlights the necessity of effective communication among healthcare professionals and the importance of educating patients about their treatment. Identified gaps in care reveal an urgent need for protocols that integrate patient-centred approaches, allowing for a multidimensional strategy. In conclusion, nursing care is fundamental to the humane treatment of oncology patients, promoting their autonomy and dignity. Continuous monitoring of symptoms and emotional support are essential for optimizing the treatment experience, ensuring quality care that is sensitive to individual needs.

Keywords. Oncology care, Oncology nurse, Nursing assistance, cancer care

1. Introduction

Comprehensive care for oncology patients requires a multidisciplinary and patient-centered approach, facilitating communication and ensuring that patients' needs and concerns are integrated into treatment decisions, with a particular emphasis on the fundamental role of nursing. The increasing incidence of cancer, especially in countries like Brazil, makes the involvement of nursing professionals in prevention and early diagnosis essential.¹

Oncological nursing is crucial for providing humanized care, ensuring the physical, emotional, and social well-being of patients. Nurses offer continuous support and promote patient autonomy

in symptom management and adaptation to treatment.²

In this context, nursing professionals play a vital role, operating in various settings, from hospitals to home care, and across multiple specialties such as pediatric and surgical oncology. They are responsible for coordinating care and educating patients about their illness and treatment, thereby promoting better treatment adherence through a multidimensional approach. Continuous support facilitates communication between doctors and patients, ensuring quality care and more effective recovery.³

When analyzing the relevance of nursing care for oncology patients, it becomes apparent that there are gaps in treatment and interventions carried out by

nurses. For instance, a lack of clarity in the responsibilities among healthcare professionals and support organizations can hinder the integration of care. Therefore, it is necessary to establish better care protocols, adopting more person-centered measures rather than solely disease-focused ones, to assist patients in their daily routines.^{2,3}

2. Methodology

For the development of this study, an integrative literature review method was chosen, focusing on comprehensive care for oncology patients and highlighting the significance of the nursing role. The search for studies was conducted in the following databases: PubMed, Scielo, and the National Library of Medicine, utilizing the descriptors "oncology care," "oncology nurse," "nursing assistance," and "cancer care." The search was performed by combining two or three of the aforementioned descriptors.⁴

Inclusion criteria considered articles published between 2010 and 2023, in Portuguese and English, that addressed nursing care for oncology patients. Exclusion criteria included studies not available in full text, systematic reviews, clinical trials, and articles with an exclusively medical focus. The collected data were organized into a database to facilitate the analysis of the publications. Screening was conducted through reading the titles and abstracts of all texts found in the databases. The initial search yielded 45 articles. After refinement based on the established criteria, 10 articles were retained and 35 were excluded for not meeting the study criteria.

3. Results and Discussion

The main nursing interventions include symptom management, such as pain, fatigue, and nausea, as well as providing emotional support to patients and their families. Studies show that effective nursing practice significantly improves patients' quality of life by reducing physical and emotional suffering. However, in Brazil, there are still significant challenges regarding equitable access to treatment, which negatively impacts the quality of care provided.^{5,6}

Communication between hospitals, clinics, and organizations is essential for implementing training programs for nurses, guiding them on available support options. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that patients have access to information about support services and resources, utilizing them effectively⁷. An appropriate division of responsibilities among healthcare professionals is also crucial to prevent overload in specific areas and consequently improve the quality of care provided to patients.⁸

Nursing assistance is a fundamental pillar in the journey of oncology patients. The emotional and psychological support offered by nurses helps patients develop resilience and a more positive mindset, aiding them in facing the challenges posed by diagnosis and treatment. By educating and informing patients about their treatment, symptoms, and self-care, nurses promote a sense of security in the face of illness. Additionally, a critical and effective assessment of symptoms is essential for improving patients' quality of life.⁹ Nursing also serves as a bridge between patients and their families, facilitating communication and emotional support.¹⁰

The lack of structural resources and specific training increases the workload for nurses, leading to burnout and compromising patient care⁸. Another factor exacerbating this situation is the constant rise in cancer cases. Nevertheless, nurses play a crucial role in providing emotional support and palliative care, promoting autonomy and dignity during treatment and in the final stages of life.⁹

4. Conclusion

The use of footnotes should be avoided. Nursing assistance is fundamental for the comprehensive care of oncology patients, particularly in symptom management and emotional support. Its role is crucial in providing excellent care, thanks to the emotional support offered, the implementation of palliative care, and the promotion of a more humanized and sensitive approach to individual needs, fostering meaningful connections. Educating patients about treatment and the management of side effects is also essential to ensure better understanding and adherence to treatment. Continuous monitoring and management of symptoms are imperative for improving patients' quality of life, adjusting interventions as necessary, and integrating both technical and human aspects that are essential to the treatment experience.

5. Acknowledgement

We would like to express our gratitude to God for the opportunity to write this article, and to our families for their support and encouragement as we pursue our futures.

6. References

- [1] Freire et al., 2024. *Assistência de Enfermagem em Cuidados Paliativos a Pacientes Oncológicos. *Revista de Terapia Intensiva*, disponível em [Revista FT](<https://revistaft.com.br>) [oai_citation:3,Assistência de enfermagem em cuidados paliativos a pacientes oncológicos – ISSN 1678-0817 Qualis B2](<https://revistaft.com.br/assistencia-de-enfermagem-em-cuidados-paliativos-a-pacientes-oncologicos/>).
- [2] BlaNaito T. Uniting for greater impact: The crucial role of oncology nurses in cancer care. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Oncology Nursing*. 2023;11(2):100370. doi:10.1016/j.apjon.2023.100370.
- [3] Kallio R, Jones M, Pietilä I, Harju E. Perspectives of oncology nurses on peer support for patients with cancer. *Eur J Oncol Nurs*. 2021;51:101925. doi:10.1016/j.ejon.2021.101925. [4]
- [4] Souza MT de, Silva MD da, Carvalho R de Integrative review: what is it? How to do it? *einstein* (São Paulo) [Internet]. 2010 Jan;8(1):102–6. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1679-45082010RW1134>
- [5] Rieger PT, Yarbro CH. Role of the Oncology Nurse. In: Kufe DW, Pollock RE, Weichselbaum RR, et al., editors. *Holland-Frei Cancer Medicine*. 6th edition. Hamilton (ON): BC Decker; 2003. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK13570/>
- [6] Nascimento LKA da S, Medeiros ATN de, Saldanha E de A, Tourinho FSV, Santos VEP, Lira ALB de C. Sistematização da assistência de enfermagem a pacientes oncológicos: uma revisão integrativa da literatura. *Rev Gaúcha Enferm*. 2012;33(1):177–85. doi:10.1590/S1983-14472012000100023.
- [7] Nascimento LKA da S, Medeiros ATN de, Saldanha E de A, Tourinho FSV, Santos VEP, Lira ALB de C. Sistematização da assistência de enfermagem a pacientes oncológicos: uma revisão integrativa da literatura. *Rev Gaúcha Enferm* [Internet]. 2012 Mar;33(1):177–85. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1983-14472012000100023>
- [8] Sória DA de C, Bittencourt AR, Menezes MF de FB, Sousa CAC de, Souza SR de. Resiliência na área da Enfermagem em Oncologia. *Acta Paul Enferm*. 2009 Sep;22(5):702–6. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0103-21002009000500017>.
- [9] Frith J, Chao NJ. Oncology Nursing Care. In: Aljurf M, Majhail NS, Koh MBC, et al., editors. *The Comprehensive Cancer Center: Development, Integration, and Implementation* [Internet]. Cham (CH): Springer; 2022. Chapter 7. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK584206/> doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-82052-7_7
- [10] Sales CA, Grossi ACM, Almeida CSL de, Silva JDD e, Marcon SS. Cuidado de enfermagem oncológico na ótica do cuidador familiar no contexto hospitalar. *Acta Paul Enferm* [Internet]. 2012;25(5):736–42. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0103-21002012000500014>

