Core Competencies for Bone Marrow Transplantation Nurse Practitioners

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The role of the bone marrow transplantation nurse practitioner (BMT NP) has been implemented in most major academic transplantation centers; however, little literature supports the scope of practice and core competencies in this setting. With an increasing shortage of oncologists, opportunities exist for BMT NPs to become leaders in the clinical management of BMT recipients. This article reviews the literature and current professional guidelines to develop core professional and clinical competencies for BMT NPs.

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An Opportunity for Nurse Practitioners

Nurse practitioners (NPs) provide a holistic approach to health care that may improve outcomes for BMT recipients. The impact and value of oncology NPs related to quality, cost-effectiveness, competency, and patient satisfaction are well documented (Bishop, 2009; Bryant-Lukosius et al., 2007). With the growing shortage of transplantation oncologists, NPs can maintain and even increase patient caseloads. Utilizing BMT NPs will likely result in improved patient outcomes because their approach enhances coordination of care across settings (Bishop, 2009; Gajewski et al., 2009; Griffith, 1999; Léger & Nevill, 2004).

Because of their medical complexity, transplantation recipients are not managed independently by NPs, but rather within a close, collaborative relationship with a team of healthcare providers (Griffith, 1999). Despite the current role of the BMT NP in most major academic transplantation centers, limited evidence in the literature supports a standard scope of practice for this specialty. In a survey of Canadian oncology NPs, more than a third of respondents reported that their roles as advanced practice nurses were not clearly defined (Bryant-Lukosius et al., 2007). Two U.S. professional nursing organizations, the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN), 2006 and the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), 2007, have published scope of practice, standards of care, and competencies for NPs in their specialty areas. However, specific scopes of practice, standards of care, and competencies have not been developed for BMT NPs.

Methods

A literature search was conducted using PubMed and MEDLINE® with the following search terms: bone marrow transplant, acute care nurse practitioners, nurse practitioners, allogeneic transplant, practice guidelines, role, and scope of practice. This search yielded one applicable publication (Griffith, 1999).

A second search was performed adding the terms management and care of, and excluding the terms role and scope of practice. In addition, publications by the AACN and ONS were reviewed for practice guidelines, standards of care, and competencies.

This article synthesizes core competencies for BMT NPs from the literature and professional organizations. Because BMT NPs practice in outpatient settings, intensive care units, and acute, subacute, and ambulatory settings, the literature...