

Update on the Role of Research in the Oncology Nursing Society

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Changes are underway at the Oncology Nursing Society to align resources so that scientists have the support needed to generate new knowledge and clinicians have access to tools needed to use evidence-based interventions that can speed the translation of research to transform cancer care.

The Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) is one of the largest professional nursing specialty organizations in the United States. Research has been a core component since its inception in 1975. In fact, the development of the first research committee blossomed within ONS in 1979, just four years after its initiation, and the creation of the Advanced Nursing Research Special Interest Group was established 10 years later (Mayer, 2015). The special interest groups, now called communities, provide a forum for members to share ideas and information with others who have similar interests.

Research is evolving within ONS and has undergone transformation. The objectives of this commentary are to provide an overview of the structure of research within the organization, discuss the varied research components, and provide an update of initiatives being developed to improve quality cancer care.

Structure of Research Within ONS

Nursing research experts from around the United States were convened in March 2017 for a Research Think Tank for roundtable discussions to examine future cancer nursing research directions. This two-day meeting resulted in the following recommendations for future ONS research leadership and other research-related activities:

- ONS needs a focused research agenda.
- ONS needs an experienced researcher to direct research activities.

- ONS needs to develop mentorship opportunities for nurse researchers.
- The Oncology Nursing Foundation should explore funding mechanisms and levels to develop opportunities for oncology nurse scientists.

Historically, ONS had appointed a Director of Research to oversee research activities. The first Director of Research was appointed in 1993, and the second Director of Research assumed the position from 1999–2017 (ONS, 2017). Based on feedback from the roundtable discussions, members from the Research Think Tank recommended that ONS create a research leadership position and a Research Advisory Panel that would be charged with advising on the role of the new proposed research leader within the organization.

As a result of this meeting, a scholar-in-residence (SIR) position was created to serve as the face of ONS at research meetings, work with leaders in academia to forge collaborative relationships, advocate for nursing on national panels, collaborate with the Oncology Nursing Foundation to identify areas for targeted fundraising to support mentorship and research activities, provide direction for research-related activities, and work closely with the chief clinical officer for strategic planning for research at ONS and representing the organization at a national level.

The structure of research within ONS was reconfigured so that the SIR fits within the clinical portfolio and works closely with the chief clinical officer and other personnel focused on research activities and creation of clinically focused programs to enhance quality cancer care for the ONS membership. This new infrastructure allows for interaction and ongoing dialogue between the research team and clinical experts to enhance the synergy between the generation and synthesis of research and more effective translation and implementation into clinical settings.

KEYWORDS oncology nursing research; nurse scientists; evidence-based practice; quality measures; mentorship program

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