Developing a Multidisciplinary Geriatric Oncology Program in a Community Cancer Center

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Cancer is a disease of older adults, and with unprecedented growth in the number of people entering late adulthood, an increasing need exists for specialized services and programs to address the needs of older adults with cancer. Few examples in the literature detail development of a geriatric oncology program. This article describes a pilot project undertaken by a community cancer center to develop a specialized program for older adults with cancer by identifying local demographics and population needs. It also describes a replicable plan for the development of a geriatric oncology program, which demonstrates how nursing can benefit from collaboration with other disciplines such as social work and psychology in service provision.

At a Glance

- Patients older than 65 require specialized services to address their unique needs during cancer treatment.
- Many older adults’ needs are psychosocial in nature and not easily identified by clinicians.
- Multidisciplinary team collaboration is imperative to address the medical, emotional, and social needs of older adults undergoing cancer treatment.

The Evolution of Geriatric Oncology as a Subspecialty

Cancer increasingly has become a disease of late adulthood, in part because of better management of other life-threatening...