Introduction:
Improving Oncology Nursing Through Advances in Quality-of-Life Issues

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In 1995, the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), with support from Amgen USA and Amgen Canada, held a state-of-the-knowledge conference on quality of life (QOL). The participants included nurse researchers, nurse clinicians, psychologists, nurses who had cancer, and ONS staff. All participants had expertise related to QOL. From this conference, a summary article was published in the Oncology Nursing Forum that addressed the current knowledge and issues related to QOL (King et al., 1997). King and Hinds (1998, 2003), with assistance from many of the experts from the conference, published the first nursing book on QOL.

A decade later, the QOL of patients with cancer and their families continues to be of great importance and a challenge to oncology nurses. Although some QOL controversies have not yet been resolved, advances have been made. Many of the advances are the result of contributions by oncology nurses.

The American Cancer Society (2005) projected that 1,327,910 new cases of cancer would be diagnosed and 570,280 people would die of the disease in 2005. Certain subgroups, such as African Americans and women, face more distressing statistics than others. Consequently, oncology nurses must continue to be involved with QOL issues for patients and families. Every oncology nurse, regardless of his or her practice, research, administration, or educational setting, needs to be included in addressing QOL issues.

This supplement on advances in QOL covers key QOL issues for oncology nurses. Experts in QOL contributed articles that include current information on the state of the science for oncology nurses in practice, research, education, or administration.

References

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