Cancer continues to be a major health problem in the United States. Chemotherapy is prescribed either prior to or after surgery in an attempt to diminish tumor mass, eradicate occult micrometastatic disease, and increase disease-free survival. The chances for survival are enhanced if patients receive all of the recommended chemotherapy treatments for their specific disease. However, because of associated chemotherapy-related distress symptoms, patients often have difficulty adhering to the prescribed schedule. Developing interventions to assist people to better tolerate cancer treatments and, therefore, increase their chances for survival is an oncology nursing priority and a major focus of oncology nursing research.

The specific aim of this study was to determine the immediate and long-term effects of a virtual reality (VR) distraction intervention on symptom distress levels in adults with lung, colon, or breast cancer receiving IV chemotherapy. Specific research questions included whether measurements...