

# Development and Testing of the Oncology Patients' Perceptions of the Quality of Nursing Care Scale

Laurel Radwin, PhD, RN, CS, Kristine Alster, RN, EdD, and Krista M. Rubin, RN, MS

**Purpose/Objectives:** To develop and test the Oncology Patients' Perceptions of the Quality of Nursing Care Scale (OPPQNCS).

**Study Design:** Development and psychometric testing of a scale to measure perceptions of patients with cancer of quality of nursing care.

**Setting and Sample:** Hematology-oncology service of a comprehensive center in a New England tertiary medical center. The sample consisted of 436 patients in active treatment for cancer; two-thirds were female, and the mean age was 54.8 years.

**Methods:** Eight subscales and 112 initial items were developed from concepts and data from a grounded theory study of patients' perspectives of the quality of their cancer nursing care. Fifty-nine items resulted from an expert panel's review for content validity. Construct validity was tested using exploratory factor analysis. Principal components analyses (PCA) with promax (oblique) rotation were conducted. Criteria for item retention were a factor loading of greater than or equal to 0.4 and unambiguous loading on one factor. Internal consistency reliability was determined using coefficient alpha.

**Findings:** The initial PCA yielded four factors that explained 81% of the variance. Three forced four-factor solutions using PCA and promax rotation were required for all items to meet criteria. The final scale included 40 items (alpha = 0.99) in four subscales: responsiveness (22 items, alpha = 0.99), individualization (10, 0.97), coordination (3, 0.87), and proficiency (5, 0.95). A short form (18 items, alpha = 0.97) was created using stepwise regression.

**Conclusions:** Psychometric properties indicated that both OPPQNCS forms adequately measure cancer nursing care quality from the patient's perspective.

**Implications for Nursing:** The OPPQNCS holds promise for nurses who wish to monitor and improve the quality of patient-centered cancer nursing care and those who wish to investigate relations among care quality and healthcare system characteristics, patient characteristics, and nurse sensitive patient outcomes.

## Key Points . . .

- ▶ The Oncology Patients' Perceptions of the Quality of Nursing Care Scale (OPPQNCS) was developed from a qualitative study-generated middle range theory to measure the quality of cancer nursing care from the patients' perspective.
- ▶ The OPPQNCS comprises four subscales: responsiveness, individualization, coordination, and proficiency.
- ▶ Patients complete the OPPQNCS by ranking the frequency of nursing activities that represent care processes.

## Background

Patients' perceptions of nursing care have been measured using patient satisfaction scales, scales based on conceptualizations of care quality from professional nurses' perspectives, and scales developed with some patient input. Although patient satisfaction frequently has served as a proxy for the quality of nursing care (McDaniel & Nash, 1990), this construct may be too narrow to fully reflect the quality of nursing care (Dozier, Kitzman, Ingersoll, Holmberg, & Schultz, 2001; Lin, 1996). For example, after developing the Care/Satisfaction Questionnaire (CARE/SAT) for patients with cancer, Larson and Ferketich (1993) questioned whether patient satisfaction and patients' perceptions of nurse caring were conceptually equivalent. Similarly, nurse and health services researchers, among others, have proposed that the "patient's perception of being

*Laurel Radwin, PhD, RN, CS, is an assistant professor and Kristine Alster, RN, EdD, is an associate professor, both in the Department of Adult and Gerontological Nursing at the University of Massachusetts in Boston; and Krista M. Rubin, RN, MS, is a nurse coordinator in Cutaneous Oncology at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, MA. This study was funded, in part, by a Mentored Clinical Scientist Development Award from the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality (K08 HS 11625), a Healey Grant from the University of Massachusetts in Boston, and a grant from the Eta Omega Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International. (Submitted June 2002. Accepted for publication September 15, 2002.) (Mention of specific products and opinions related to those products do not indicate or imply endorsement by the Oncology Nursing Forum or the Oncology Nursing Society.)*

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The patient's perception of care is an important indicator of healthcare quality, according to expert panels of the American Academy of Nursing (Mitchell, Heinrich, Moritz, & Hinshaw, 1997) and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) (Committee on Quality of Health Care in America, IOM, 2001), as well as the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (1998) and healthcare advisory groups (President's Cancer Panel, 1999). Thus, the development of valid and reliable measures of patients' perceptions of care is vital to investigations related to the quality of care and variables such as patient outcomes, healthcare system characteristics, and patient characteristics. The purpose of this study was to develop and test an instrument that measures the quality of cancer nursing care from the patient's perspective.