

Mentorship for Nurse Scientists: Strategies for Growth From the Oncology Nursing Society Research Mentorship Task Force

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PROBLEM STATEMENT: To describe research mentorship strategies needed to strengthen oncology nursing science and ensure that a cadre of nurse scientists are available to carry out the research mission of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS).

DESIGN: Multimethod consensus-building approach by content experts of the ONS Research Mentorship Task Force and approval by the ONS Board of Directors was employed.

DATA SOURCES: Expert opinion, surveys, notes from an all-day research mentorship retreat, and literature review were used.

ANALYSIS: Content analysis was used to synthesize notes from the research mentorship retreat.

FINDINGS: Various strategies were identified to strengthen the pipeline of oncology nurse scientists and promote development across the career trajectory.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE: Mentorship is essential to advance the growth and impact of oncology nursing science and requires support throughout the career trajectory.

KEYWORDS nurse scientist; mentorship; oncology nursing science; career development

ONF, 46(6), 769–774.

DOI 10.1188/19.ONF.769-774

Research that focuses on patients, families, and communities across the cancer care continuum is a central component of the mission of the Oncology Nursing Society ([ONS] n.d.-a). The core values of innovation, excellence, and advocacy are dependent on the creation of new knowledge to advance oncology nursing science. ONS-supported research influences cancer care delivery and positively affects patients and families. These gains are from the work of oncology nurse scientists responsible for a history of rigorous, patient-focused research (ONS, n.d.-b). Current oncology nurse researchers are committed to mentoring the next generation of nurse scientists.

All the roles in oncology nursing are important and require resources, attention, and expertise. The role of the oncology nurse scientist can be wide ranging. Traditionally, most research is developed, funded, implemented, analyzed, and disseminated through the PhD-prepared academic scientist in an institution with research capabilities and within a tenure-track position.

The fledgling oncology nurse scientist working in academic research requires time, institutional and individual support, and skill building through mentorship and socialization to be successful. Although this need is widely recognized in academic settings, the availability of skilled mentors may be lacking in the priority research areas of oncology nursing. Nurse scientists who have experienced some initial success in their research careers also confront significant challenges at each subsequent career phase. The need for later-stage targeted mentorship may not be recognized or facilitated in academic or cancer center settings; mentorship, which has the potential to advance the growth and impact of