

Update to 2019–2022 ONS Research Agenda: Rapid Review to Promote Equity in Oncology Healthcare Access and Workforce Development

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PURPOSE: The Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) tasked a rapid response research team (RRRT) to develop priorities to increase diversity, equity, and inclusivity in oncology clinical care and workforce development.

METHODS: An RRRT of experts in health disparities conducted a rapid review of the literature, consulted with oncology nurse leaders and disparities researchers, and reviewed priorities from funding agencies.

RESULTS: Significant gaps in the current oncology disparities literature were identified and used to inform priority areas for future research practice and workforce development in oncology nursing.

SYNTHESIS: This is the second article in a two-part series that presents findings on structural racism and health inequities in oncology nursing. In the first article, three priority areas for oncology nursing research were presented. In this article, strategies to improve diversity, equity, and inclusivity in clinical practice and the oncology workforce are described.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH: Recommendations are presented to inform research, clinical, administrative, and academic oncology nursing settings on increasing diversity, equity, and inclusivity and deconstructing structural racism.

KEYWORDS structural racism; cancer disparities; community outreach; diversity, equity, and inclusion

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This is the second article in a two-part series that presents results from a rapid review about structural racism and health inequities in oncology nursing research. The first article presents recommendations for oncology nursing research (Jones et al., 2021). This article discusses structural racism and the inequities within nursing education, the nursing workforce, and the delivery of oncology nursing care.

Background

The influence of structural racism is evident in the development of nursing education and the nursing profession, which has a long history of racism and segregation. Black nurses faced two significant obstacles in the 1860s. Black nurses were working to claim their new place in society following the Emancipation Proclamation. In addition, the role of nurses was not yet respected, and they were instead seen as subservient handmaidens (Kalisch & Kalisch, 1995). The profession of nursing is rooted in structural racism because it developed during the time of racial segregation and the legal doctrine of separate but equal. Black nurses were primarily trained in Black colleges and took care of patients in Black hospitals or segregated sections of prominently White hospitals, all of which lacked equal resources. The first school for Black nurses was established by the Provident Hospital in Chicago, Illinois, in 1891. The National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses (NACGN) was founded in 1908 and was comprised of 1,200 members by the 1940s (Vaughan, 1997). In the 1940s, Black nurses were trained in 32 all-Black schools and 14 desegregated schools, and they fought