Oncology Nursing in Iceland

Overview of main developments at Landspitali

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Landspitali (LSH) and oncology nursing

- Each year 1400 people are diagnosed with cancer in Iceland and a total of 12,000 are cancer survivors
- More than 90% of patients get treatment and care at LSH including: Surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, autologous stem cell transplant, specialized palliative care and rehabilitation
- A Chief Nurse Executive is responsible for the overall administration of the institution’s nursing care services and Nurse Managers are responsible for the unit level nursing care
- A Oncology Nursing Council (2001) within medical oncology, haematology and palliative care oversees the development of oncology nursing, quality improvement, research and staff development
- The Oncology Nursing Council includes a professor of oncology nursing, clinical nurse specialist, nurse managers, assistant nurse managers and project nurses
- In 2013 11 nurses with with an advanced degree in oncology nursing were working at LSH (1 Phd, 10 MSc) and five had the role of a clinical nurse specialist

Oncology Nursing Research and Quality Improvement Projects at LSH

- Distress Management (screening and guidelines)
- Symptom screening – (ESAS)
- End of Life care: Liverpool Care Pathway
- Clinical Practice Guidelines on Palliative care, nausea and vomiting, skin care in radiotherapy
- Family Nursing (Calgary Model)
- Oral chemotherapy and role of nurses
- Complementary therapies: relaxation
- Pain Resource Nurse
- Rehabilitation: needs assessment and guidelines
- Cancer and sexuality: integrating oncosexology
- Patient education: The cancer notebook, webbased patient education
- Oncology Nurse Navigators

Education

- 1919 Icelandic Nurses Association founded
- 1931 School of Nursing (closed in 1986)
- 1973 Department of Nursing at the University of Iceland
- 1982 Oncology diploma-registered nurse educated in Denmark
- 1988 First masters prepared oncology nurse educator employed at University of Iceland and Landspitali
- 1995 Expansion in continuing education in oncology nursing
- 2001 First positions for advanced oncology clinical nurse specialists at LSH
- 2002 Faculty of Nursing: Chair of Oncology Nursing appointed
- 2003 Development of a curriculum in oncology nursing at undergraduate, diploma and graduate levels
- 2003 Development of a clinical research program in oncology nursing

The Icelandic Oncology Nursing Society

Founded in 1996 with the kind encouragement and support of Kathy Redmond, former EONS president.

The society has a board of seven; president, president elect, treasurer, secretary and three board members

Counting over 130 members from all parts of the country, and Icelandic cancer nurses living abroad

Main role is to promote primary and secondary prevention of cancer, and to increase the quality of nursing care provided to cancer patients and their significant others

Main objectives are to:

- Provide consultation to the board and committees of the Icelandic Nurses Association
- Influence government policies regarding priorities in healthcare
- Promote oncology nursing education
- Promote empowering cancer patient education
- Encourage collaboration between oncology nurses
- Promote and encourage collaboration between oncology health care workers
- Encourage oncology nursing research and the utilization of research findings

Conclusion

- Over the past two decades many important clinical and educational developments have occurred within oncology nursing in Iceland
- The increasing prevalence of cancer, improved survival rates, and the vast majority of patients being treated for all phases of cancer in outpatient settings, present an important challenge to the health care system. Therefore it is important to maintain competent oncology nurses.
- Nurses trained in specialized masters and doctoral Degree programs are the leaders of the future in all aspects of oncology nursing: clinical practice, education, management and research.