



EONS Safety Manifesto – Objectives and key recommendations

Provide information to patients & their significant others and encourage them to take an active part in their care

When providing evidence-based information to patients, their significant others and our colleagues, cancer nurses can take the lead in patient safety. According to the WHO (2018) – out of hospitalised patients, approximately 1 in 10 experience harm and around half of those incidents could have been prevented. Furthermore, cancer patients are particularly vulnerable to harmful events, with 3 in 10 patients in oncology settings experiencing harm. Unsafe handling of medication is both costly and causes harm to our patients; around 15% of health care spending is wasted on adverse events.

As a cancer nurse you can involve patients and their significant others by encouraging them to tell you directly if something is or seems to be wrong regarding any aspect of their treatment and care. This is likely to reduce the risk of harm. Encourage patients and their significant others to ask questions regarding their treatment and care.

Avoid direct contact with cytotoxic and radiation drugs when planning pregnancy or during pregnancy

If you are a cancer nurse and planning to become pregnant or are pregnant and/or breastfeeding, tell your manager directly. Ask for alternative duties if you work with cytotoxic drugs, radioactive agents or with open radiation sources. You may assess cancer patients and manage side-effects, but should avoid direct contact with cytotoxic drugs, such as connecting, disconnecting cytotoxic drugs from a patient, handling of bodily fluids or dealing with a cytotoxic spillage. Even though protective clothing and following safety precautions will lower the risk, it will not eliminate it.

Always follow safety precautions; use personal protective equipment

Healthcare staff working with cytotoxic drugs should use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in order to protect against the potential risks of skin rashes, effects on reproduction and even cancer.

As a cancer nurse caring for patients receiving chemotherapy and / or radioactive agents, please ensure you have access to appropriate PPE. Know where your cytotoxic spillage kit is located, ensure that you follow safety precautions, SPEAK UP if there are deviations in practice and request periodical training updates on this topic.

Closed System Transfer Devices (CSTD) can protect from spillage together with safer handling. More evidence is needed on the effectiveness and impact on health care staff's health related to usage of CSTD.

Safety precautions include reducing medication errors. As cancer nurses, we often care for patients receiving complex cancer treatment regimens. WE MUST adhere to protocols and remember the 5 Rs of medication administration:

1. Right patient
2. Right drug
3. Right dose
4. Right route
5. Right time

Always speak up and question if something is, or appears to be wrong

Cancer nurses' actions and skills are of great importance for safety. Safe procedures and the correct use of devices are crucial steps in safety promotion, as is the courage to speak up and question when adverse events do occur in practice, including risks and near misses.

In this way, cancer nurses can contribute strongly to achieving a high patient safety culture, which will reduce the risks for both patients and staff.

Further reading

EONS Cancer Nursing Education Framework, module 3 -

<http://www.cancernurse.eu/documents/EONSCancerNursingFramework2018.pdf>

Ten Facts on Patient Safety by WHO -

https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/patient_safety/en/

“Five moments for medication safety” – for both health care professionals and patients -

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/311157/WHO-HIS-SDS-2019.3-eng.pdf?ua=1>

“Adverse events in hospitalized cancer patients”

Haukland EC, von Plessen C, Nieder C, Vonen B. Adverse events in hospitalised cancer patients: a comparison to a general hospital population. *Acta Oncologica*. 2017;56(9):1218-23

“Preventable and mitigable adverse events in cancer care”

Lipitz-Snyderman A, Pfister D, Classen D, Atoria CL, Killen A, Epstein AS, et al. Preventable and mitigable adverse events in cancer care: Measuring risk and harm across the continuum. *Cancer*. 2017;123(23):4728-36.

“Safety Hazards in Cancer Care”

Mattsson TO, Knudsen JL, Brixen K, Herrstedt J. Does adding an appended oncology module to the Global Trigger Tool increase its value? *Int J Qual Health Care*. 2014;26(5):553-60.

An editorial on Patient Safety - Charalambous, A. and Kelly, D.

(2018) Promoting a safety culture through effective nursing leadership in cancer care. *European Journal of Oncology Nursing*. 36: vi-vii Available at doi: 10.1016/j.ejon.2018.10.002.

How nurses adhere to safe handling - Polovich M, Olsen M.

Safe Handling of Hazardous Drugs. 3rd Ed. Pittsburgh, PA: Oncology Nursing Society; 2017; Wiley, K.

The Oncology Nursing Society’s Toolkit -

https://www.ons.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/ONS_Safe_Handling_Toolkit_0.pdf

Cytotoxic drugs and pregnancy - Gilani S, Giridharan S. Is it safe for pregnant health-care professionals to handle cytotoxic

drugs? A review of the literature and recommendations. *Ecancermedicalscience*. 2014;8:418.

Transfer of cytotoxic drugs with or without CSTD - Bartel, S. B., et al. (2018). "Multicenter evaluation of a new closed system drug-transfer device in reducing surface contamination by antineoplastic hazardous drugs." *Am J Health Syst Pharm* 75(4): 199-211

A systematic review on the use of CSTD - Gurusamy, K. S., et al. (2018). "Closed-system drug-transfer devices plus safe handling of hazardous drugs versus safe handling alone for reducing exposure to infusional hazardous drugs in healthcare staff." *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 3: CD012860.

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the [American Society of Health-System Pharmacists](#) (ASHP)

European Legislation Protecting Cancer Nurses and other Healthcare Workers

Protection from harmful substances:

Directive (EU) 2019/130 amending Directive 2004/37/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32019L0130>

Protection against long working hours:

The European Working Time Directive

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32003L0088>

Global Level Action on Patient Safety (World Health Organisation):

http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB144/B144_29-en.pdf

The Manifesto is endorsed by:



The future of cancer therapy

