ONCC is conducting a study of the role of the oncology nurse, and your participation is critical. In mid-May, OCN®s were sent an e-mail with a link to an Internet-based OCN® role delineation survey. The primary purpose of the study is to shape future versions of the OCN® examination to ensure that it reflects current oncology nursing practice.

ONCN®s Can Earn Points Toward Renewal and Win $100

ONCN®s who complete the survey will receive five points toward certification renewal by the Oncology Nursing Certification Points Renewal Option in the Volunteer Service category. In addition, they will be entered into a drawing to win one of 10 $100 gift cards. The survey must be completed by June 22, 2007.

ONCC Board Starts to Explore Certification in a Subspecialty

Mark Flitcraft, RN, BSN, OCN®

Recently, ONCC has received requests from a variety of oncology nursing groups to consider certification in several oncology nursing subspecialties such as breast care, radiation oncology, and hematopoietic peripheral blood cell transplantation. The ONCC Board of Directors has researched interest in subspecialty certification for two years and has determined that the topic is worthy of further exploration. Breast care, one of the most widely reported areas of expertise among oncology nurses, will be the first subspecialty certification to be pursued.

ONCC currently is in the process of conducting a formal role delineation in areas of breast care, including defining roles and responsibilities of nurses who work in breast care and the specific knowledge necessary for nurses to competently practice in this subspecialty. It is projected to be completed by summer 2007.

In February, ONCC issued a call for volunteers to serve on the breast care task force.

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Editor's Note

Living the Life You Want

Heather Thompson Mackey, RN, MSN, APRN, BC, AOCN®

One of the best things about spring’s arrival is the opportunity for change and renewal. Flowers bloom, leaves begin to fill branches, and, particularly in North Carolina, pollen begins to turn everything an awful shade of yellow green—but I digress.

Many of us have listened to Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) President-Elect Brenda Nevidjon, RN, MSN, FAAN, speak at oncology nursing venues. One of my favorite presentations, which I think of this time of year, is the Trish Greene Memorial Quality of Life lecture she gave at the 2003 ONS Institutes of Learning. Nevidjon spoke about the challenges of maintaining a personal quality of life while dealing with the demands that family, community, and career bring. “Knowing what contributes to your personal quality of life prepares you to be present and involved effectively and caringly with patients. . . . If we are preoccupied, stressed, and fatigued from being in the middle, our ability to listen will be compromised. . . . Each of us has the power to make the change we want to see in our lives” (Nevidjon, 2004).

It is simply up to us to take that step. Think about the things in life that make you happy and fulfilled. Now think about the things that drain your energy and take away from good quality of life. Take time to do some much-needed “spring cleaning” in your personal life, and get rid of those negatives. Make the necessary changes to live the life you want. You will be able to give more to your family, friends, and patients and live the best life possible.

Reference


Prepare for Certification Testing With These Sample Questions

Have you wondered what the questions are like on an ONCC certification examination? “Practice Round” is a new feature of ONCC News that offers sample questions from ONCC practice tests. The following questions were taken from an OCN® practice test. The answer, rationale, and reference for each item can be found at the end of the column.

Please note that the questions do not appear on current OCN® examinations; they were written for previous tests that no longer are in use. Because the questions may be older, the references cited may have been replaced by recent versions. When preparing for an ONCC certification examination, candidates should use current test blueprints and reference lists. Although the practice questions demonstrate the format of ONCC test items, they are not intended to be study materials.

Additional practice test questions will be published in future issues of ONCC News. Web-based practice tests for the OCN® and CPON® examinations can be purchased at www.oncc.org/getcertified/practicetests.shtml. A free Web-based practice test is available for each ONCC certification examination.

1. Which terms are associated with malignant tumors originating in the epithelial tissue?
   A. Osteo and chondra
   B. Lympho and myelo
   C. Adeno and squamous
   D. Lipo and rhabdo

2. It is important to assess attitudes about illness and care seeking in different racial and ethnic groups to
   A. Effectively change attitudes.
   B. Determine the socioeconomic status of each group.
   C. Tailor treatment approaches to each group.
   D. Determine where early interventions will be ineffective.

Answers

1. C. Rationale: Tumors are classified by the tissue of origin. The malignancies that arise from the epithelium are squamous cell, adenocarcinoma, basal cell, and choriocarcinoma.

Reference


2. C. Rationale: The aim of transcultural nursing is to understand and assist diverse cultural groups with their nursing and healthcare needs. Assessing the cultural aspects of an individual’s lifestyle, health beliefs, and health practices will enhance the nurse’s decision making and judgment when providing care, thereby tailoring care to the individual.

Reference

Mapping the Concentration of Certified Nurses

This map was created by the public member of the ONCC Board of Directors, Lori Nicholson, MS, MA. Lori is a geographer and has a strong preference (some might call it an affliction) to visually view and interpret data on a map whenever possible. With Geographic Information System (GIS) software, she used zip code data provided by ONCC staff and mapped the location of all ONCC certified nurses across the United States. The GIS software then clustered the zip code locations into counties, whose colors on the map indicate the “density” of ONCC certified nurses in each county. The number of certified nurses in each state also is shown.

Lori has prepared other geographic analyses of ONCC data for Board review. Many of her maps were displayed during a poster session at the 2007 Oncology Nursing Society Congress and were discussed during a podium session, “Oncology Nursing Certification: Where We Are and Where We Need to Go,” and at an ONCC advocates meeting.

Shape the Future of Certification as a Board Member

ONCC is calling for nominations for one position on the ONCC Board of Directors that opens for election in November 2007. The position is open to certified nurses who hold current OCN®, CPON®, AOCN®, AOCNP, or AOCNS certification. The position is for a three-year term that begins June 1, 2008. Interested candidates must submit a completed nomination packet by July 21, 2007. Nomination packets can be downloaded from the ONCC Web site at www.oncc.org.
Memorial Hospital System in the South Broward District of southern Florida is an institution worthy of recognition for supporting certification.

Comprised of six hospitals with three outpatient cancer centers, two radiation therapy sites, and two inpatient units, Memorial Hospital System boasts 15 OCN®s out of 18 outpatient nurses (83%) and has 15% of its inpatient oncology nurses certified. The number of certified nurses providing specialized care grows annually, thanks to Memorial’s dedication to the value of certification.

Memorial nurse Mary MacKrell, RN, BScN, MEd, OCN®, MSN(c), fondly remembers her certification role model: an OCN® clinical nurse specialist who encouraged her to formalize her expertise in oncology nursing by attaining certification. MacKrell recognized that the credential would be appreciated by future employers and could open new doors. She believes that achieving the designation OCN® “is an affirmation of professionalism and a symbol of excellence in nursing. It is a bond amongst nurses that offers power by association.”

Paying it forward, MacKrell mentors her oncology colleagues at Memorial and supports them in obtaining certification. She teaches a biannual OCN® course and encourages staff to take the course as a way to assess learning needs or as preparation prior to taking the examination.

Memorial provides the course, along with study materials, including the Oncology Nursing Core Curriculum, and a study guide free of charge to potential test candidates. Once nurses have achieved the credential, Memorial provides reimbursement for the test fee through a $1,000 one-time bonus that newly certified nurses receive.

OCN®s seeking recertification also may attend the preparatory course, and they receive reimbursement for their renewal fees after successfully completing the recertification process. By providing all of the resources for certification, Memorial unites oncology nurses throughout the expansive system for a shared purpose.

The effort does not stop there. OCN® recognition is published in the Memorial Westword newsletter, which is distributed to all staff. Memorial also provides recognition for certified nurses during the hospital’s annual Nurses Week Celebration, along with an annual oncology nursing celebration dinner attended by staff and managers from the cancer program. Oncology nurses from local private practices are invited to attend the celebration as well.

During the dinner, which is cosponsored by the Memorial Cancer Institute and a pharmaceutical company, new OCN®s receive sterling silver OCN® pins and have their pictures added to the celebration board and archives. An ONCC recognition plaque is on display in the cancer center, acknowledging the large percentage of certified outpatient nurses.

Two components of the Memorial Hospital System, Memorial Hospital West and the cancer center, recently completed their site visit for Magnet status. “The site visitors were really impressed with the level of support and recognition for certification at our hospital” said MacKrell, who feels strongly that supporting and encouraging staff to attain certification fosters the drive toward achieving and sustaining Magnet status. They are awaiting the decision from the American Nurses Credentialing Center.

With a strong focus on customer satisfaction, MacKrell said, OCN®s are encouraged to inform their patients and families of their certification, further validating their expertise in oncology. “It is a part of our policy,” MacKrell said, “to keep patients informed of who we are and what we have to offer.”

Congratulations to Memorial Hospital System, and thank you for all that you do in promoting oncology nursing certification.

Employer Spotlight

Florida Hospital System Encourages Certification

Janice Nuuhiwa, RN, MSN, CPON®

Memorial Hospital System in the South Broward District of southern Florida has six hospitals with three outpatient cancer centers, two radiation therapy sites, and two inpatient units. The system provides several incentives for oncology nurses to become certified and honors all oncology nurses at an annual dinner sponsored by Memorial Cancer Institute. In the back row, from left to right, are Desitha Mertilus, RN, OCN®, Laureano Dalarma, RN, Daren Grosman, MD, PhD, associate director of Memorial Cancer Institute, Terri Reec, RN, OCN®, and Andrea Searie, RN. In the front row, from left to right, are Colette Schietromo, RN, ARNP, OCN®, Hallie Goldman, RN, OCN®, Xiamara Saute, RN, OCN®, and Carole Cave, RN, OCN®.

Memorial Hospital System in the South Broward District of southern Florida
ONCC Recognizes Employers for Certified Staffs

ONCC recently awarded 50 recognition plaques to institutions where most professional nurses are ONCC certified.

Berks Hematology Oncology Associates, Regional Cancer Center, in West Reading, PA
Billings Clinic, Cancer Center, in Montana
Bozeman Deaconess Cancer Center in Montana
Cancer Centers of North Carolina in Raleigh
Cancer Centers of North Carolina, Dunn Office, in Raleigh
Community Medical Center, Outpatient Infusion, in Toms River, NJ
Connecticut Children’s Medical Center, Hematology/Oncology, in Hartford
C.R. Wood Cancer Center at Glens Falls Hospital, Inpatient Oncology, in New York
C.R. Wood Cancer Center at Glens Falls Hospital, Outpatient Oncology Education and Support, in New York
C.R. Wood Cancer Center at Glens Falls Hospital, Outpatient Medical Oncology and Hematology Clinic and Treatment Center, in New York
C.R. Wood Cancer Center at Glens Falls Hospital, Radiation Therapy, in New York
Denver Health Medical Center, Infusion Center, in Colorado
Franklin Medical Center, Oncology, in Greenfield, MA
Harris Methodist Hospital, Oncology Care Unit, in Bedford, TX
Hematology Oncology Associates of the Quad Cities in Bettendorf, IA
Holy Cross Hospital, Oncology, in Silver Spring, MD
Internal Medicine Associates, Hematology-Oncology, in Bloomington, IN
Jordon Hospital, Club Cancer Center, in Plymouth, MA
Lahey Clinic Medical Center, Gordon Cancer Center, in Burlington, MA
Lehigh Valley Hospital, John and Dorothy Morgan Cancer Center, Multi-Purpose Area, in Allentown, PA
McLeod Cancer and Blood Center in Johnson City, TN
Medical Oncology and Hematology, Meriden Office, in Connecticut
Memorial Cancer Institute, Memorial Hospital West, in Pembroke Pines, FL
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, Thoracic Oncology Service, in New York, NY
Methodist Hospital, Cell and Gene Therapy Outpatient Department, in Houston, TX
Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, Penn State Cancer Institute, Inpatient Unit, in Hershey, PA
Miriam Hospital, Hematology/Oncology, in Providence, RI
Montana Cancer Specialists, Oncology Treatment Center, in Missoula
Montgomery Cancer Center in Alabama
Nebraska Methodist Hospital, Radiation Oncology, in Omaha
Plains Regional Medical Center, Cancer Center, in Clovis, NM
Portneuf Cancer Center in Pocatello, ID
Quality Oncology Care in Indianapolis, IN
San Juan Oncology Associates in Farmington, NM
Space Coast Medical Associates, Titusville Office, in Florida
St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Oakland/Michigan Cancer Institute in Pontiac
St. Luke’s Mountain States Tumor Institute in Twin Falls, ID
St. Mary’s Health Center, Cancer Services, in Jefferson City, MO
Texas Oncology Physicians Associates, South Austin Cancer Center
Tyler Hematology Oncology in Texas
University of Maryland, Central Maryland Oncology, Radiation, in Baltimore
University of Maryland, Helen Dent Department of Radiation Oncology, in Baltimore
University of Maryland, Radiation Oncology, in Baltimore
Upper Valley Medical Center, Cancer Care Center, in Troy, OH
VA Medical Center, Hematology-Oncology Clinic, in San Francisco, CA
Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Henry-Joyce Cancer Center, in Nashville, TN
Wenatchee Valley Medical Center, Medical Oncology, in Washington
West Coast Gynecologic Oncology in Clearwater, FL
William Beaumont Hospital, 5 North, in Troy, MI
Wright Patterson Medical Center, Hematology Oncology Clinic, at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH

ONCC presents free plaques to patient care facilities where more than 50% of nurses are ONCC certified. To request a plaque or a replacement certificate, visit www.oncc.org/awards/plaques.shtml.

Board Selects New Testing Agency

The ONCC Board of Directors selected Pearson VUE, a leader in the computer-based testing industry, as its new testing partner. Pearson VUE will work closely with ONCC to develop and administer computer-based OCN®, CPON®, AOCNP, and AOCNS examinations.

Pearson VUE is the electronic testing business of Pearson and services professional licensing and certification markets in healthcare and other industries. From operational centers in the United States, Australia, Japan, the United Kingdom, India, and China, and through nearly 4,000 test locations, Pearson VUE provides a variety of testing services. Headquartered in Bloomington, MN, Pearson VUE is known for its industry-leading customer service, comprehensive test development capabilities, and innovative computer-based testing technology.

According to ONCC President Patricia Baldwin, RN, MS, OCN®, “The Board carefully considered the capabilities of several testing agencies before selecting Pearson VUE. We are confident they will meet ONCC’s high standards for test development and delivery, while providing superior test administration services to our candidates.”

ONCC test candidates will begin taking examinations at Pearson VUE centers in January 2008. The change in testing companies will not affect candidates who are scheduled to test in 2007. Watch for more information in upcoming issues of ONCC News and on the ONCC Web site at www.oncc.org.

Board (Continued from page 1)

article on page 1 about breast care subspecialty role delineation. The study and other meetings planned in 2007 will generate the framework needed to develop subspecialty examinations.

Fresh faces in ONCC leadership.

Officers were elected for the 2007–08 term of the ONCC Board. Carlton G. Brown, RN, AOCNS®, was named president; Josephine Visser, RN, BSN, OCN®, vice president; and Vicki J. Norton, RN, BSN, OCN®, secretary-treasurer. Newly elected directors Julie Earle, RN, OCN®, and Carol Brueggen, RN, MS, AOCNS, will join the Board in June, along with a new public member. Outgoing ONCC directors are President Patricia Baldwin, RN, MS, OCN®, Julie Ponto, RN, MS, AOCNS®, APRN-BC, and public member Lori Nicholson, MS, MA.
Advocates Lead by Example in Promoting Certification

Michael Smart, RN, BSN, OCN*

Part of being certified oncology nurses is the recognition we receive through the process of becoming certified. Certification validates our knowledge against a national standard and makes a difference in the care we provide by ensuring that we have the knowledge required to competently care for people with cancer. Along with the recognition comes the responsibility to share our experiences with other nurses. By discovering what our patients have gained through our own journeys, we realize that excellence should be the standard, not the exception.

The Oncology Nursing Certification Advocates Program provides certified oncology nurses with tools and information to promote the benefits of certification in their organizations and communities. More than 525 certified nurses currently are participating in the program. Two advocates in particular, Julie Villagran, RN, MS, AOCNS, and Ann Marie Wisniewski, RN, MSN, AOCN®, have demonstrated leadership abilities by helping other nurses see the benefits of certification, including personal benefits, benefits for patients in their care, and the benefits to oncology nursing of promoting excellence in care as a standard. Villagran serves as the oncology clinical practice coordinator for Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center in Las Vegas, NV. Wisniewski is the education coordinator for the Cancer Center at Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey.

Wisniewski, in discussing her reasons for becoming an advocate, said, “I am the nurse educator for a large cancer center, and we believe that having a majority of our nurses certified through ONCC would be beneficial in showing the expertise of the RNs.” The response, she noted, usually is positive, but nurses sometimes seem reluctant about testing. “The excuses come easily. The nurses are too busy and don’t test well, or ‘maybe next year,’ they say. I just keep talking it up. Our institution gives certified RNs $1,000 at initial certification and each time they renew. Also, since we can always renew by ONC-PRO [the Oncology Nursing Certification Points Renewal Option], I think this has been a great incentive for those who hate taking tests. I am rewarded every time one of my nurses passes the test, and for those who are not successful the first time, I tell them how I failed the first time, too.”

As for Villagran, her passion for oncology started early in her career. “I joined ONS [the Oncology Nursing Society] as a nursing student and became an oncology certified nurse a couple years after graduating,” she said. “I feel that having the certification credential after my name lets people know that being an oncology nurse is not just a job to me. . . . It is a career that I’m vested in whole-heartedly.” Not abdicating leadership to those in advanced roles, Villagran initially joined the advocates program as a staff nurse. Staff nurses are in the ideal position to see the benefits of certification and may be in more credible positions to argue certification merits among their peers.

However, while attempting to impart her sense of commitment and passion to those around her, Villagran has found that advocating for change is not always the easiest path. “Most noncertified nurses seem to brush me off when approached in a group but seem more receptive when approached individually.” Though unspoken, the uncertainty may be related to fears about taking the OCN® examination, explained Villagran. “Many don’t want anyone to know until after they pass that they have taken the exam,” she said.

Helping other nurses to prepare for and feel secure in taking the OCN® test is perhaps one of the greatest roles of an advocate. When asked what has worked for her in her advocating efforts, Villagran explained the benefit of numbers. “Peer pressure—the more certified nurses there are working together, the easier it is to get non-certified nurses to consider taking the test,” she said. “When certified nurses are few in number, it’s easier to justify oneself in not pursuing the goal.” Villagran also talked about how removing barriers and providing incentives can go a long way in promoting certification. “Encouraging employers to sponsor review courses and offering financial incentives for certification also helps,” she said.

Thank you to Wisniewski, Villagran, and the other advocates for all they do to promote the benefits of oncology nursing certification. If you are interested in becoming an advocate, visit the ONCC Web site at www.oncc.org/support/advocatesprogram.shtml. The site provides a list of current advocates by state for those who have questions or want to speak with someone about certification.

Roster of Advocates Grows

Twenty-four certified nurses recently joined the Oncology Nursing Certification Advocates Program. Advocates are certified nurses who volunteer to promote the benefits of certification in their workplaces, chapters, and communities. More than 525 certified nurses are participating in the program. ONCC welcomes the following advocates.

Virginia Bayliss, Lebanon, NH
Rose Bell, Fairfield, CA
Barbara Bigelow, Rancho Mirage, CA
Jacqueline Boreland, Lawrenceville, GA
Cynthia Ciaschi, Rochester, NY
Jill Cirese, Akron, OH
Erin Dailey, Easton, PA
Grace Daun, San Jose, CA

Julie A. Dobbs, Milwaukee, WI
Sharon Eichholz, Lebanon, NH
Brenda Eveslage, Saint Cloud, MN
Charles Westley Foster, Glendale, AZ
Kathleen Garland, Edison, NJ
Pam Hall, Sheridan, WY
Jennifer Hester, Cincinnati, OH
Wendy Hughel, Knoxville, TN
Deborah Hustace, Henderson, KY
Lisa Keller, Basking Ridge, NJ
Judie Kucera, Akron, OH
Cheryl Mohrlein, Middletown, CT
Kay Reinke, Troy, MI
David Schneider, Charlottesville, VA
Anne Marie Shafftic, Teaneck, NJ
Yvonne Ward, Greeley, CO

For more information on joining the advocates program, or for a list of advocates, go to www.oncc.org/support/roster.shtml.
Nurses Get Free Registration Through Scofield Awards

ONCC has selected 50 nurses to receive the 2007 Roberta Scofield Memorial Certification Award. The Scofield Award provides a free registration for a certification test or renewal. ONCC received 117 applications for 2007. As part of the application process, nominees must submit an essay up to 250 words describing how certification will help them achieve their goals. Congratulations to the following nurses.

- Andrea Hansen, RN, MSN, OCN®
- Christopher Hermann, MSN, NP-C
- William Hudson IV, RN, BSN, OCN®
- Cynthia Johnson, RN, OCN®
- Teresa Knoop, MSN, RN, AOCN®
- Elizabeth Koch, RN
- Christine Korte, RN, OCN®
- Tracy Krimmel, MSN, AOCN®, APRN-BC
- Bew Meng Lai, RN
- Cynthia Mauldin, RN, OCN®
- Christine Merenda, RN, MS, OCN®
- Shelley Nielsen, MS, RN, OCN®, CHES
- Diane Otte, RN, MS, OCN®
- Deborah Pach, RN, MS, CPON®, AOCN®
- Kris Perigo, RN
- Maureen Quick, RN, MS, OCN®
- Karen Reider, OCN®
- Janet Rekersdre-Rafferty, RN, BSN, MS
- Diane Reynolds, RN, MS, OCN®, CNE
- Doreen Schrank, MS, RN, OCN®
- Mary Schueller, RN, MSN, OCN®, CHPN
- Ann Shastay, RN, MSN, AOCN®
- Lisa Smith, RN, MS, AOCN®, CNS
- Linda Steiner, RN
- Kathleen Sweeney, RN, MS, CNS
- Ellen Tanner, RN, BSN, OCN®
- Nancy Tena, RN, BN, CPON®
- Rosemarie Tucci, MSN, AOCN®
- Merri-Cathleen Verbooit, RN, OCN®
- Jayne Waring, RN, BSN, OCN®
- Mary Jean Wasielewski, RN, OCN®, CCRN
- Jeannine Waterman, RN, BSN, OCN®
- Lindsay Williamson, RN, BSN, OCN®
- Rita Wortman, RN, BSN, OCN®
- Mary Schueller, RN, MSN, OCN®
- Doreen Schrank, MS, RN, OCN®
- Mary Schueller, RN, MSN, OCN®, CHPN
- Jan Gray, RN, BSN, CHPN
- Sharon Grosskopf, RN, BSN, MBA

ONCC Increases Number of Awards

In 2008, ONCC will award as many as 75 free registrations for a certification test or renewal through Roberta Scofield Memorial Certification Awards—a 50% increase in the number of awards available in previous years. Applicants do not need to be currently certified but must be members of either the Oncology Nursing Society or the Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses. Nomination materials are available at www.oncc.org. Completed packets must be received by August 1, 2008.

Readers Respond

The previous issue of ONCC News asked how certification has changed your practice. One reader wrote,

I believe it has opened many doors of practice. It does carry validity and respect for the skill of being a nurse specializing in oncology. I take pride in letting my patients know that of the 16 nurses on the floor, 8 of us are certified, and this gives patients a sense of confidence in us. I am very proud of the work and knowledge I have gained through my certification.

Cynthia Willhoit, RN, OCN®
Kearney, NE

Tell ONCC News why you have chosen to become certified or why you have not. Send responses to ONCC News at oncc@ons.org (e-mail) or fax to 412-859-6168. Please mark your response “Readers Respond.”