

Oncology Nursing Documentation Competencies

Question:

What are the competencies for Oncology Nursing Documentation in Ontario?

Introduction:

We acknowledge that individuals live with cancer in a variety of ways and that care is delivered and documented with a patient focused approach regardless of treatment modalities and/or clinical setting.

A crucial element in the Oncology patient's plan of care is the documentation which should include assessments, plans, interventions and evaluations. Oncology nursing documentation serves as an integral part of safe and effective nursing practice that reflects knowledge, judgment, critical thinking and meaningful patient focused information.

The objective for establishing guidelines for Oncology nursing documentation is to ensure that the essence of Oncology nursing practice is reflected in the documentation for the purposes of communication, accountability, meeting legislative requirements and quality improvement.

Guiding Principles:

The standards set out by the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) for Nursing Documentation and Professional Standards represent the minimum expectations for Oncology nursing practice. Oncology nursing documentation will align with the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology (CANO) Standards of Care, Roles in Oncology Nursing and Role Competencies, RNAO Best Practice Guidelines

- Oncology nurses from centres providing cancer care will utilize tools and policies and procedures specific to that institution
- Documentation of the intervention and the evaluation is equally as important as the assessment
- Documentation for telephone practice will meet the standards as set out by the Oncology Nursing Program through CCO
- It is an expectation that documentation of the initial comprehensive health assessment will be entered in the patient's health record. This will serve as baseline data for ongoing oncology nursing assessments, interventions and follow ups across the continuum of care

Practice Domain 1: Comprehensive Health Assessment

Practice Standard

“The specialized oncology nurse conducts timely and comprehensive assessments of the health and supportive care needs of the individual with cancer and their families across the cancer continuum using a systematic approach that is sensitive to language and culture. The specialized oncology nurse considers the situational context and the needs and responses of the individual and family in determining the scope and depth of assessment.” (CANO Practice Standards and Competencies for the Specialized Oncology Nurse pg. 7)

Competencies:

A specialized oncology nurse demonstrates compliance with oncology nursing documentation guidelines by documenting the following:

Health History

- Collaboration with the health care team about co-morbid conditions that have been identified and assessments on how they may impact the cancer disease process and the individual/ family response to illness
- Past cancer, treatment and response
- History and knowledge of current illness
- Any self reported or institutional health history reviewed by the Oncology Nurse and any findings that may or will impact on the plan of care
- A complete list of the patient’s medications, allergies & adverse reactions during the initial health history and upon regular review of the patient’s medications
- The patient’s use of and response to complementary and alternative health care (CAHC) practices throughout the cancer trajectory
- Lifestyle choices including diet, smoking, occupation, work environment, social history, and education level

Physical Assessment

- A comprehensive initial physical assessment focusing on known systems, symptoms and complications for that particular patient population
- A baseline assessment of the patient’s performance status using a valid measurement tool implemented within the centre
- Height and weight as part of the baseline data collection in the appropriate section of the patient’s health record
- Vital signs which should be recorded at the point of care if this is a required element for the standard of care for the Cancer Care facility

- Any clinical data that would significantly affect the clinical finding (e.g. laboratory results, oxygen saturation) to obtain a comprehensive picture of the patient's physical response to their cancer experience

Symptom Assessment

- Regular assessments and monitoring for potential acute and chronic physical changes to the patient's response to illness using focused assessment tools. The Edmonton Symptom Assessment Scale is a recommended tool and validated for use with the cancer population.
- In-depth assessments that assess the patient for the presence of common cancer-related pain and other symptom experiences on a regular and on-going basis using a validated assessment tool and exploring the individual's symptom experience

Psychosocial, Spiritual and Cultural Assessment

- The impact and meaning of illness on the patient/family and their support systems, taking into consideration their present life circumstances and their view of quality of life
- The patient/family's supportive and informational needs and their preferred role in decision making
- The patient/family's responses to cancer, their main concerns, feelings, fears, goals and understanding of prognosis
- Cultural influences as they relate to the illness experience, treatment, family coping mechanisms and communication
- Any referrals made to the interdisciplinary team as a result of assessments/screenings for mental health needs, financial, social and practical concerns, religious and spiritual practices and family coping mechanisms

Sexual Health

- Emotional responses to changes in sexual health and their impact on the patient and partner as it relates to symptoms, disease, and treatment
- The patient/partner's understanding of possible/probable changes in fertility and the need for birth control during treatment and recovery

Practice Domain 2: Supportive and Therapeutic Relationships

Practice Standard

“The specialized oncology nurse engages in caring and therapeutic relationships with individuals with cancer and their families. These relationships are supportive and sensitive to changing physical and psychosocial-spiritual responses.” (CANO Practice Standards and Competencies for the Specialized Oncology Nurse pg. 9)

Competencies

A specialized oncology nurse demonstrates compliance with oncology nursing documentation guidelines by documenting the following:

- The patient/family’s perspective, reactions and responses, cultural and spiritual beliefs
- What the interprofessional* health care team needs to be aware of to provide individualized care
- Coordination of care such as intrahospital and community referrals for individuals/families who require supportive, psychosocial and spiritual care (i.e. depression)
- Nursing interventions aimed at restoring optimum health in all its dimensions during the cancer experience that utilized supportive care strategies and best practice/evidence-based psychosocial care interventions that are within the scope of practice to facilitate effective coping

*Interprofessional initiatives are defined as the provision of comprehensive health services to patients by multiple health care professionals who are trained to work collaboratively to deliver the best quality of care in every health setting. Interprofessional care encompasses partnership, collaboration and a multi-disciplinary approach to enhancing care outcomes. - From the Ministry of Long Term Health and Long Term Care RFP for Interprofessional, Preceptorship, Mentoring and Collaboration

Practice Domain 3: Management of Cancer Symptoms and Treatment Side Effects

Practice Standard

“The specialized oncology nurse integrates and applies knowledge of cancer pathophysiology, disease progression, treatment modalities, treatment side-effects and complications, and symptom problems to assess, plan, implement and evaluate the outcomes of best practice/evidence-based care and other clinical interventions.” (CANO Practice Standards and Competencies for the Specialized Oncology Nurse pg. 10)

Every institution will have a process to ensure that documentation for patients receiving multi-modality treatments will be accessible to the interprofessional team.

Competencies

A specialized oncology nurse demonstrates compliance with oncology nursing documentation guidelines by documenting the following:

- Assessment and intervention of acute and long term side effects and adjustments to the plan of care in collaboration with the patient and interprofessional team
- Cancer symptoms using valid standards and guidelines such as Cancer Care Ontario’s “Managing Central Venous Access Devices in Cancer Patients: A Clinical Practice Guideline”
- Vital signs based on the required standard of care for prescribed treatment protocol and/or patient condition

Patient Assessment

May include clinic, community or inpatient assessment

- The initial comprehensive health assessment must be completed
- Subsequent focused assessments relevant to the patient’s present experience will relate to their specific symptoms, concerns, psychosocial issues, disease process, co-morbid conditions, side effects both acute and long term related to specific treatment modalities
- Clinical presentation including oncological emergencies.
- Severity and duration of symptoms and side effects as determined by a valid tool i.e. ESAS common toxicity criteria including an evaluation of previous nursing interventions, new nursing interventions and follow-up plan
- Need for ongoing education

- Changes to medication and allergy status
- Changes to alternative and complementary health care practice

Surgery for Diagnosis/Treatment

- The patient's understanding of the role surgery plays in their cancer diagnosis and treatment
- Post Operative plan of care
- Need for ongoing education

Systemic Therapy Administration

Includes chemotherapy, biotherapy, hormones, stem cell transplant and supportive therapies:

- A review of new and ongoing identified symptoms, side effects and toxicities both acute and long term
- Evaluation of any complications and interventions from previous visits including extravasation & infiltration
- A vascular access assessment for the site integrity. The dressing change, cap change and blood return and patency of peripheral intravenous and/or central venous access device (CVAD)
- Independent double checks for Chemotherapy, Biotherapy and Body Surface Area have been completed based on the hospital's systemic therapy administration policy and procedure
- Start and Stop times for administration of chemotherapeutic agents and biotherapy
- All adverse events including actual incident, interventions and outcomes
- Equipment malfunction such as infusion pumps
- Need for ongoing education

Radiation Therapy

- A review of new and ongoing identified symptoms, side effects and toxicities both acute and long term. Evaluation of any complications and interventions from previous visits
- All adverse events including actual incident, interventions and outcomes
- Need for ongoing education

Clinical Trials

- Will adhere to protocol specific requirements

Practice Domain 4: Teaching and Coaching

Practice Standard

“The specialized oncology nurse prepares individuals with cancer and their families for many different aspects of the cancer experience providing education, psychosocial-spiritual support and counseling across the continuum.” (**CANO Practice Standards and Competencies for the Specialized Oncology Nurse pg. 13**)

Competencies

A specialized oncology nurse demonstrates compliance with oncology nursing documentation guidelines by documenting the following:

- Initial assessment of patient/family’s readiness to learn, learning styles, values and beliefs, preferred depth of information, complementary and alternative health care practices, level of knowledge/understanding about their cancer, effective coping mechanisms related to their cancer experience
- Adjustments to teaching and coaching based on factors such as life stage, culture, education and family decision-making and communication styles that impact on learning
- Interprofessional referrals as required such as Genetic Counseling
- Relevant information/education provided throughout the cancer experience:
 - Prevention and screening
 - Disease process and progression and prognosis
 - Possible treatment options
 - Plan and goal of care
 - Treatments - purpose, side effects, scheduling, treatment, administration, management of side effects
 - Pain and symptom relief
 - Physical care through treatment and recovery
 - Psychosocial, spiritual care
 - Medication administration
 - Oncologic emergencies and other possible
 - Complications
 - Adopting healthy lifestyle behaviours

Practice Domain 5: Facilitating Continuity of Care/Navigating the System

Practice Standard

The specialized oncology nurse promotes and facilitates continuity of care across care settings and between health care providers by sharing information on the individual/family's current situation, plan of care and goals. The specialized oncology nurse assists the individual/family to navigate the health care system through understanding its structure, system and process and providing them with strategies to work within that system. (CANO Practice Standards and Competencies for the Specialized Oncology Nurse pg. 15)

Competencies

A specialized oncology nurse demonstrates compliance with oncology nursing documentation guidelines by documenting the following:

- Contact information for the appropriate person to contact for concerns as the patient/family move along the cancer trajectory
- The assessment and need for resources to support their goals of care as well as any gaps or problems that the individual/family may encounter and the strategies used to facilitate access to care
- Clarification and validation of the individual/ family's expectations of the cancer care system
- Information the interprofessional health care team needs to be aware of to provide coordinated care to meet individual/family goals, needs, plan of care, main concerns and expectations.
- Any change in individual/family's needs as they move across the cancer care continuum (prevention and screening to end-of-life care or survivorship) and resources available to support their needs

Practice Domain 6: Decision Making and Advocacy

Practice Standard

“The specialized oncology nurse, in collaboration with other members of the interprofessional health care team, facilitates self-determination and informed decision making for the individual/family. The specialized oncology nurse advocates on behalf of the individual/family, communicating and documenting their preferred approach to care.” (**CANO Practice Standards and Competencies for the Specialized Oncology Nurse pg. 17**)

Competencies

A specialized oncology nurse demonstrates compliance with oncology nursing documentation guidelines by documenting the following:

ASSESSMENT:

- The patient’s goals and preferences/wishes/concerns throughout care process
- The decision making process including supporting data to arrive at the decision
- Information tools/ verbal explanation provided for decision making
- The outcome of care meetings, case conferences and/or discussions
- Who attended decision making discussions, topics discussed, outcomes and follow-up plan
- Established plan and follow-up concerns related to decision making
- Illumination of the person’s perspective using their own words (i.e. quotes)
- Involvement of patient advocacy and ethics partners
- Concerns related to capacity to make decisions and actions implemented
- Consent according to the CNO and institutional guidelines for obtaining Consent

References

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- Oncology Nursing Society (2005) 2nd Edition Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Guidelines and Recommendations for Practice
- Oncology Nursing Society (2005) 3rd Edition Manual for Radiation Oncology Nursing Practice and Education
- Program in Evidence-Based Care, Cancer Care Ontario (2006) Managing Central Venous Access Devices in Cancer Patients: A Clinical Practice Guidelines
- Program in Evidence-Based Care, Cancer Care Ontario (2005) The Prevention and Management of Acute Skin Reactions Related to Radiation Therapy
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- The College of Nurses in Ontario (2005) Practice Guideline: Consent
- The College of Nurses in Ontario (2005) Practice Guideline: Ethics
- The College of Nurses in Ontario (2005) Telepractice
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