

## Abstract

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) has projected a shortfall of oncologist by the year 2020. This shortfall will impact greatly the ability to care for cancer patients. ASCO's Workforce Strategic Plan has established guidelines to ensure continuing access to quality cancer care. One of ASCO's commitments in care delivery is to promote the transformation of oncology care to ensure an environment in which quality cancer care can be accessed by and provided to cancer patients.

Oncology nurse practitioners are ideally suited to fill the gap between supply and demand in providing excellent quality care to the oncology population. This highly educated oncology advanced practice nurse will become one of the solutions to the predicted oncologist's shortage.

The purpose of this study is to assess cancer patient's perceptions and expectations of the role of the oncology nurse practitioner. A survey of practicing oncologists revealed that approximately 54% of those surveyed currently work with an Oncology Nurse Practitioner (ONP), but the specific role that this provider plays is less clear.

An oncology nurse practitioner working in a private oncology practice with a solo oncologist will administer a questionnaire to a group of oncology patients within a private oncology practice. Purposive sampling technique will be used. All patients will be undergoing active cancer treatments. The questionnaire is designed to provide descriptive information from cancer patients regarding the impact and value of the ONP within the practice. This information will add to the body of knowledge sought from the ASCO Workforce Study focusing on pilot projects to test innovative practice models, such as the ONP/Oncologist collaborative practice.

Oncology nurse practitioners possess the experience, scientific knowledge and specialty skills to care for the oncology population alongside their physician partners. This collaboration should minimize interruption in cancer care. Improving quality of care and patient outcomes should prove considerable for the oncology population.