

# Chapter 6

## Role and Impact of Advanced Practice Nurses in the Delivery of Oncology Care

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter examines the crucial role of advanced practice nurses (APNs) in oncology care worldwide. In the face of an alarming increase in new cancer cases and complex patient needs, APNs have become key players in delivering specialized care. The chapter describes the current implementation of advanced oncology care across different countries, providing an in-depth analysis of how APNs contribute to various aspects of oncology, including symptom management, care coordination,*

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*inter-professional collaboration, holistic patient care, and engagement with the patient's support system. Additionally, the chapter assesses the impact of APNs on health outcomes and the quality of care. Practical recommendations are also offered to optimize the effectiveness of APNs in oncology care.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Oncology, as a field dedicated to the fight against cancer, is facing increasingly complex challenges due to the continuous increase in new cases and the diversity of patient needs. In 2022, according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), there will be 20 million new cases of cancer and 9.7 million cancer-related deaths. In addition, some 53.5 million people were still alive five years after a cancer diagnosis. Around one in five people develop the disease during their lifetime, with approximately one in nine men and one in twelve women dying from it (WHO, 2022).

Projections for 2050 are even more worrying, with over 35 million new cases of cancer expected, a 77% increase on 2022. This rapid increase is due to an ageing and growing population, as well as increased exposure to risk factors linked to socio-economic development. Tobacco, alcohol and obesity are the main factors contributing to this increase, and air pollution remains a major environmental risk (WHO, 2022).

Faced with these alarming figures and the growing complexity of healthcare needs, the fragility of this population and the emergence of “pathway medicine” are forcing healthcare organizations to adapt and evolve. However, systematic literature reviews show that APIs can improve patient health and quality of care for different populations, while reducing healthcare use and associated costs (Bryant-Lukosius et al., 2015; Donald et al., 2015; Martin-Misener et al., 2015; Newhouse et al., 2011).

Thanks to their extensive training and clinical expertise, these healthcare professionals are at the forefront of meeting the growing and varied needs of cancer patients (Bryant-Lukosius, Cosby et al., 2015; Stahlke, Rawson and Pituskin, 2017).

This chapter explores in detail the impact of advanced practice nursing (APN) on oncology care worldwide, highlighting successful strategies and challenges encountered. We begin by examining the evolution of advanced practice nursing, defining the concept and describing its distinctive features. The requirements of this practice will be discussed, including aspects related to education, scope of practice and regulation. Next, we'll look at the specific roles of a APNs in oncology and the skills required to excel in this field. We will also analyze the impact of these roles on health outcomes and quality of care. Finally, practical recommendations will be proposed to maximize the effectiveness of APNs in oncology care.

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