Evidence-based practice is a concept that has become integral in today’s healthcare system. Nurses must be able to provide care to patients and families that is based on the best available evidence so they can potentiate the best possible patient outcomes. According to Rutledge and Grant (2002), evidence-based practice “defines care that integrates best scientific evidence with clinical expertise, knowledge of pathophysiology, knowledge of psychosocial issues, and decision making preferences of patients” (p. 1). Evidence-based practice is unique because it includes the preferences and values of patients and their families in the process. Although clinicians may use the best evidence available, application and outcomes will differ based on patients’ values, concerns, expectations, and/or preferences.

The journey of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) to improve the quality of oncology care and to integrate evidence-based practice into care has reached a new milestone. ONS has developed a resource to help oncology nurses use evidence in their practices, improving nursing-sensitive patient outcomes (NSPOs). NSPOs are outcomes that are attained through or are significantly impacted by nursing interventions. The interventions must be within the scope of nursing practice and integral to the processes of nursing care (Given et al., 2004). NSPOs represent the consequences or effects of nursing interventions and result in changes in patients’ symptom experience, functional status, safety, psychological distress, and/or healthcare costs.

Who really cares if patients achieve the desired outcome? Many stakeholders in today’s healthcare arena look at patient outcome data, including patients themselves, insurers of care, providers of care, legislators, purchasers, and regulators of health care. All of the stakeholders want to know whether patient care has value.