The EDUCATE Study: A Continuing Education Exemplar for Clinical Practice Guideline Implementation

Lyssa Friedman, RN, MPA, OCN®, Constance Engelking, RN, MS, OCN®, Rita Wickham, PhD, RN, AOCN®, CHPN, Catherine Harvey, RN, DrPH, AOCN®, Martha Read, RN, MSN, and Kimberly Bardel Whitlock, PharmD

Cancer care is evolving from a solo practitioner care delivery system based on tradition and anecdotal experience to a multidisciplinary, collaborative, science-driven paradigm. Evidence-based practice facilitates optimal care quality for patients with cancer and is expected for medical and nursing practitioners through clinical practice guideline implementation. Clinician education based on principles of adult learning is one method of implementing clinical practice guidelines in clinical practice. However, research demonstrates that conventional static methods of education do little to change behavior; instead, effective education incorporates interactive formats, provides feedback, and includes reminder and reinforcement strategies. The EDUCATE (Educating Clinicians to Achieve Treatment Guideline Effectiveness) Study offers one model for clinical practice guideline implementation using educational methods. A faculty of nurse educators, together with practice champions, carried out an intensive educational intervention comprised of multiple teaching/learning activities during a 12-month period in community oncology practices throughout the United States. In addition to an overview of clinical practice guidelines and educational methods that can be used for implementation of clinical practice guidelines, the obstacles faced and lessons learned through the EDUCATE Study are presented, along with recommendations for implementation in the practice setting.