Top 10 Articles: What Do They Tell Us?

The editorial boards for the Oncology Nursing Forum and Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing (CJON) looked at what you were reading in the past year (Moore, 2012) (see Table 1), and the list of articles tells us that you are focused on topics that help you in your daily work as oncology nurses. Two of the 10 highly ranked articles focused on adherence to oral medication regimens, which has gained increasing importance as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves more oral cancer treatments. In fact, four of the seven new drugs approved by the FDA from 2010 to 2011 were oral agents (Vogelzang & Kris, 2011). However, at the same time, we faced unprecedented drug shortages, including more than 20 IV chemotherapy drugs that were in short supply. Those issues represent some of the challenges oncology nurses face when delivering the best cancer care in an ever-changing healthcare environment.

Many other changes in cancer care are highlighted in the American Society of Clinical Oncology’s Clinical Cancer Advances report (Vogelzang & Kris, 2011). Some notable topics include the change in recommendation about using prostate-specific antigen blood tests for prostate cancer screening, the use of low-dose computed tomography scans to reduce lung cancer mortality rates in former or current heavy smokers, the identification of a genetic biomarker that predicts taxane-induced neuropathy, and more attention on where and how patients with cancer die and whether those two factors are in alignment with patient wishes. You may have read about those topics, heard about them in the news, or you may have seen some changes in your practice. You will want to read the American Society of Clinical Oncology report (Vogelzang & Kris, 2011) to see what else may be changing in cancer care.

By 2030, 2.3 million people will be diagnosed with invasive cancer annually in the United States compared to about 1.5 million in 2012 (Mariotto, Yabroff, Shao, Feuer, & Brown, 2011). Most of the increases (70%) will be from an aging population (President’s Cancer Panel, 2011). And, we know that almost a quarter of older adults (age 65 or older) will have five or more chronic illnesses, regularly see 13 healthcare providers, and have more than 50 prescriptions (Center to Champion Nursing in America, 2011). More nurses will need to have gerontology knowledge and skills, be prepared to coordinate and manage the care of those with complex illnesses, and be able to collaborate effectively on interdisciplinary teams in practice settings that include the home and long-term care facilities.

How prepared are you for those changes?