The Role of Oncology Nurses in the Care of Adults With Sickle Cell Disease

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Oncology nurses are experts in pain management, and pain is the hallmark of sickle cell disease (SCD). Because individuals with cancer and individuals with SCD often receive care from hematologists or oncologists and are admitted to the same nursing units, oncology nurses need to have an understanding of SCD and the challenges that these individuals face.

Overview of Sickle Cell Disease

SCD refers to a group of inherited conditions in which a gene mutation causes the hemoglobin to assume a sickle shape, promoting vaso-occlusion and leading to both acute and chronic vascular inflammation (Ballas et al., 2012). The hallmark of the disease is pain caused by vaso-occlusion, reperfusion injury, and hypoxemia (Rees, Williams, & Gladwin, 2010).

Transition in the Delivery of Care

Introduced in 1996, hospitalists are physicians, nurse practitioners, or physician assistants who specialize in delivering comprehensive medical care to hospitalized patients and have become one of the dominant groups of healthcare providers of inpatient care in North American hospitals (Kuo & Goodwin, 2011). Patients who are defined as unattached or who have primary physicians who do not...