Cardio-oncology is a continually evolving subspecialty within oncology nursing that focuses on the assessment, identification, and management of cardiotoxicity induced or exacerbated by cancer treatment. Nurses are pivotal to the delivery of evidence-based assessment of and care for individuals who have preexisting cardiac conditions, as well as those for whom cardiac complications are related to the known and emerging toxicities of cancer treatment.

**AT A GLANCE**
- Cardio-oncology is a continually evolving specialty in the field of oncology nursing.
- Cardio-oncology is focused on the unique cardiac toxicities that are caused by, as well as preexisting cardiac conditions that can be exacerbated by, a cancer diagnosis and its treatment.
- As more patients receive care—both those with preexisting cardiac conditions and those with known or newly discovered treatment-related cardiotoxicities—it is important for oncology nurses to understand the foundational principles of cardio-oncology care, as well as opportunities for subspecialty in this area.

**Defining Cardio-Oncology**
Cardio-oncology is the intersection of two specialties (oncology and cardiology); the goal is the treatment of cardiovascular disease in patients with cancer (Cardinale et al., 2008; Herrmann & Lerman, 2014), with particular focus on the adverse effects of cancer therapy (Lenihan et al., 2016). Following cancer treatments in many patients, the risk of cardiovascular death may be higher than the actual risk of tumor recurrence (Yeh, 2006). Baseline risk factors and heart disease being equal, patients previously treated with chemotherapy (particularly those treated with anthracyclines) have been shown to have an increased risk of cardiomyopathy, heart failure, and myocardial infarction in the subsequent 20 years (Herrmann, 2020). With increasing demand in cancer care, a number of cardio-oncology clinics (Pradley et al., 2017; Snipelisky et al., 2017) are emerging across the United States, not just in primary cancer institutions, but also in general hospitals and in community centers. As such, it is essential for nurses into the assessment, identification, and management of cardiac complications in the context of cancer care. In this article, the author presents the role of cardio-oncology as a subspecialty of oncology care, with insights into how nurses across practice settings can integrate evidence-based care for individuals with cancer and cardiac complications, as well as pursue educational and training opportunities to specialize in this increasingly important field of oncology nursing.

**KEYWORDS**
cardi-oncology; cancer; heart disease; cardiotoxicities; specialty role; nursing

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