

Advanced Competencies in Oncology Nursing: A Framework for Clinical Practice and Care Outcomes

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Introduction. The evolution of oncology, characterized by increasing clinical complexity and therapeutic innovation, requires the strengthening of nursing competencies. Evidence indicates that advanced competencies are associated with improved clinical outcomes, greater patient safety, and higher quality of care. However, within the Italian context, the development and recognition of these competencies remain heterogeneous. The aim of this study was to define a framework of advanced competencies in oncology nursing applicable across different care settings, with particular attention to clinical outcomes and quality of care.

Methods. A narrative review of international literature and major competency frameworks was conducted and integrated with an analysis of the Italian context. Based on the evidence identified, a structured model of competency domains relevant to advanced oncology nursing practice was developed.

Results. The proposed framework identifies nine domains of advanced competencies: oncology sciences; pharmacology and treatment management; advanced clinical assessment; symptom management; therapeutic communication; palliative care and survivorship; clinical leadership; research and evidence-based practice; and continuity of care. The implementation of these competencies is associated with improved outcomes, reduced complications, greater patient safety, and increased appropriateness of care.

Discussion. Advanced competencies represent a key component in the evolution of oncology nursing practice and may contribute to more effective management of increasingly complex care pathways and earlier identification of complications. Their implementation in Italy remains limited by variability in educational pathways and organizational recognition. The adoption of a structured competency framework may promote standardization, safety, continuity of care, and improved clinical outcomes across oncology settings.

Keywords: Advanced Nursing Competencies, Oncology Nursing, Patient Safety

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