

Abstract

Soft Skills and Emotional Intelligence in Oncology Nursing

Maria Romilda Filice¹, Andrea Cuboni², Annalisa Roberti², Davide Ulivieri², Bruno Cavaliere²

¹ Department of Hematology-Oncology, IRCCS Ospedale Policlinico San Martino, Genoa, Italy

² Health Professions Directorate, IRCCS Ospedale Policlinico San Martino, Genoa, Italy

(Corresponding Author: mariaromilda.filice@hsanmartino.it)

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Introduction. Oncology nursing is situated within a care context characterized by high clinical and emotional complexity, where nurses are daily involved in managing patients' suffering, communicating critical information, and providing support to patients and their families. In this scenario, soft skills and emotional intelligence represent essential competencies to ensure an effective therapeutic relationship and to support nurses' professional well-being. Although the literature acknowledges their importance, the lived experiences of oncology nurses and the meanings they attribute to these competencies remain insufficiently explored, particularly through qualitative approaches.

Methods. This is an observational, exploratory-descriptive qualitative study conducted through individual semi-structured interviews. Participants are nurses with at least one year of experience in oncology settings, working across different care contexts. Interviews, lasting 45-60 minutes, are audio-recorded after obtaining informed consent, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke. Purposive sampling is adopted and guided by the principle of data saturation.

Results. The study is currently ongoing. Preliminary findings indicate the emergence of themes related to the central role of soft skills in the therapeutic relationship, the management of nurses' own emotions and those of patients, the emotional impact of oncology practice, and the use of individual coping strategies. A perceived need for structured education and training in emotional and relational competencies also emerges.

Discussion. Preliminary results suggest that soft skills and emotional intelligence are key elements of oncology nursing practice, influencing both the quality of care and nurses' well-being. This study may provide valuable insights for the development of targeted educational interventions and organizational strategies aimed at supporting nurses' emotional competencies. Further analysis will allow a deeper understanding of the contribution of these skills to clinical practice and may inform future research directions.

Keywords: Oncology Nursing, Soft Skills, Emotional Intelligence

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