



## MEASURING ONCOLOGY NURSING SENSITIVE PATIENT OUTCOMES: EVIDENCE-BASED SUMMARY **FATIGUE**

Fatigue is a prevalent and distressing symptom in people with cancer. Oncology nurses have made considerable progress in the management of fatigue, based on a growing body of research. This evidence-based summary focuses on what is currently known about cancer-related fatigue and how nurses can measure this symptom in the clinical or research setting. A panel of clinical experts at the Oncology Nursing Society Advanced Practice Nursing Retreat critiqued this summary in March 2004.

### **Key points**

1. Definitions of cancer-related fatigue are available for screening, diagnostic, and research purposes.
2. There is evidence to support the reliability and validity of a number of instruments to measure fatigue in patients with cancer.
3. Limited research identifies a number of variables that correlate with fatigue, including type of therapy, patient characteristics, and other symptoms, such as depression and sleep disturbances.
4. Consistent evidence supports two interventions to relieve fatigue, aerobic exercise and the use of erythropoietin for anemic patients, and there is limited evidence to suggest other interventions may also be effective, including nutritional support, the use of other medications, and energy conservation measures.
5. Current nursing practice guidelines, which include strategies to prevent and manage cancer-related fatigue, are based on expert clinical judgment as well as research findings.

### **Recommendations**

1. All cancer-care providers need ongoing education about the management of cancer-related fatigue.
2. All patients with cancer should receive routine education about fatigue and its management.
3. Nurses in all oncology settings should incorporate evidence-based guidelines for the prevention and management of fatigue into their practice.
4. Nurses should continue research efforts to address the gaps in existing knowledge and strengthen evidence-based practice guidelines.

### **Topics for Research Funding**

1. Design studies to investigate the underlying mechanisms of fatigue.
2. Conduct prospective studies with sufficient sample sizes to provide accurate estimates of incidence and prevalence of fatigue.
3. Conduct studies comparing the cancer patient experience to healthy normal subjects.
4. Evaluate accommodation to fatigue and response shift over time.
5. Test measures and interventions in diverse patient populations, including children and adolescents, older adults, individuals with cognitive impairment, and individuals from different racial and ethnic groups.
6. Develop and test new interventions to manage fatigue, including the mechanisms by which these interventions are effective.

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For references and the entire evidence-based summary: [Click Here](#)