

# A Survey of Oncology Advanced Practice Nurses in Ontario: Profile and Predictors of Job Satisfaction



CHSRF/CIHR Chair Program in  
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## THE ISSUE

The Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control predicts the incidence of cancer to increase by 70% over the next 15 years. Several Ontario reports recommend the expansion of advanced practice nursing (APN) roles in cancer care delivery to meet the rising demand of care. Oncology APN roles have shown significant improvement in patient and health systems outcomes related to access to care, coordination and continuity of care, satisfaction with care, improved health outcomes, and lower costs due to fewer hospitalizations and shorter lengths of stay.

## THE PURPOSE

To examine factors that influence job satisfaction for oncology APNs.

### What did we do?

We conducted a descriptive study that looked at self-reported information from 73 oncology APNs in Ontario (94.8% of eligible participants) regarding APN roles, role activities, and job satisfaction.

### What did we find?

The findings indicate that generally, oncology APNs feel confident in their clinical skills, but less confident in their diagnostic and technical skills, including knowledge regarding medical interventions, and research.

- 20% of the nurses lacked previous experience and only a few were certified at an advanced level.
- Clinical practice tended to consume most of the APN's time, followed by education and leadership activities.
- Less than 10% of the APN's time was spent on research or professional development.
- 78% of the APNs indicated that they worked overtime on a regular basis, some as high as 20 hours per week.
- In terms of job satisfaction, the APNs were minimally satisfied with their jobs, mainly due to hours of overtime worked.
- 33% indicated that they were thinking about seeking new employment due to lack of administrative support, resources, personal growth and/or career advancement.

- APNs indicated that the role demands have a negative impact on their health.
- APNs noted that graduate oncology nursing courses, internship or fellowship programs, mentorship and research practicums would help to fulfill their roles.

### How will this research help?

This research can inform educators, administrators and policy makers regarding the strategies needed to educate, recruit and retain highly qualified APNs and to improve job satisfaction in the areas of administrative support, practical resources, and workload and career advancement.

### What's next?

Better access to graduate courses, continuing education and mentorship opportunities will help develop the APN role. A provincial strategy to provide resources for APN role development is underway; however, a need to implement a systematic provincial approach to nursing and human health resources planning for cancer care is needed.

## BOTTOM LINE?

Improvement in administrative support, practical resources, education, personal career growth opportunities and workload are needed to improve job satisfaction and retention of oncology APNs.

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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