

Preparation and Evaluation of a Professional Development Series for Early-Career Oncology Nurses in Europe

Amanda Drury, PhD, MSc, PGDip, BSc, RGN, Sara Torcato Parreira, RN, MSc, and Celia Diez de los Rios, RN, ANP, MSc

The European Oncology Nursing Society Nightingale Challenge was a professional development program delivered via seven one-hour webinars focusing on leadership, career development, and managing burnout. A total of 151 participants attended one or more webinars, and 51 participants provided feedback, with 84% evaluating the program positively, 77% saying it met their expectations for learning, 65% considering the webinars relevant, and 59% stating the knowledge is applicable to personal development. Some participants experienced difficulties with the speed (8%) and length (9%) of presentations. However, online learning may enhance oncology nurses' access to personal and professional development.

AT A GLANCE

- The European Oncology Nursing Society Nightingale Challenge was designed in collaboration with young oncology nurses.
- The webinar program was delivered over a seven-week period and reached participants from 29 countries.
- Language differences and lack of available time to access the webinars were barriers for some participants.

KEYWORDS

education; continuing professional development; e-learning; oncology nursing

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Turnover in the nursing workforce has been studied extensively in the past decade (Falatah, 2021; Sawada et al., 2022; Shapiro et al., 2022; Squires et al., 2017; Woodward & Willgerodt, 2022). Globally, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have sharpened focus on the implications for recruitment, retention, and workforce planning in nursing (Buchan et al., 2022; Wynne et al., 2021). Reports suggest that nurses' turnover has increased since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which may be attributed to psychological well-being, organizational resilience, and system response (Buchan et al., 2022; Falatah, 2021). The nursing turnover and retention effects from COVID-19 add pressure to the already concerning forecasts for the nursing workforce predating the pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020).

With an increasing proportion of nurses approaching retirement, the recruitment and retention of young and early-career nurses have never been more critical (Buchan et al., 2022; Challinor et al., 2020; World Health Organization, 2020; Zhang et al., 2018). Studies estimate that 5%–30% of nurses have expressed high intentions to leave the profession (Greinacher et al., 2022; Heinen et al., 2013; Shariffard et al., 2019). This rate may be higher in specialist practice settings, including intensive care (Xu et al., 2021) and oncology care (Lagerlund et al., 2015).

Among recently graduated nurses, as many as 51% intend to leave their roles and 71% intend to leave the profession (Ulupinar & Aydogan, 2021; Zhang et al., 2017). In 2019, the European Oncology Nursing Society (EONS) Young Cancer Nurses study reported that among oncology nurses aged younger than 35 years, 21% (N = 377) did not believe they would be working as a nurse in 10 years (Drury & Diez de los Rios, 2021). Adjustment and acculturation to the specialist area of oncology nursing can be affected by various factors, including induction, availability and quality of mentorship, and workforce factors (Cosgrave et al., 2018; Hussein et al., 2017; Mazzella Ebstein et al., 2019). Continuing professional development is a priority for early-career nurses, is critical to supporting student nurses' transition into the role of RNs, and fosters career satisfaction in the long term (Price & Reichert, 2017; Rudman & Gustavsson, 2011). Early-career nurses face challenges that include working in unsupportive practice environments, which