Cancer in Sexual and Gender Minorities: Role of Oncology RNs in Health Equity

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Despite comprising almost 8% of the population of the United States, sexual and gender minority (SGM) patients with cancer experience health inequities with poorer outcomes than non-SGM patients. Although sex-based guidelines exist for certain cancers, including prostate and cervical cancer, visibility into the specific needs of SGM patients is lacking because of the absence of systematic data collection and population-based studies. Oncology RNs are pivotal in providing patient-centered care inclusive of SGM people living with cancer. This article reviews current progress in cancer care for SGM patients and emphasizes the role of the oncology RN.

AT A GLANCE
- SGM patients experience unique challenges in cancer care, including coming out to healthcare providers, healthcare providers refusing to provide care, and a potential lack of caregiver support structures.
- Institutions need to make SGM patients with cancer feel welcome and comfortable discussing their gender, sexual orientation, and specific healthcare needs.
- Nurses must stay knowledgeable about evolving literature regarding SGM patients and advocate for practices that are inclusive of and responsive to the needs of SGM patients.

KEYWORDS
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