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# **CARING FOR THE OLDER ADULT WITH CANCER IN THE AMBULATORY SETTING**

## **EDITORS**

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**Lorraine K. McEvoy, DNP, MSN, RN, OCN®  
Diane G. Cope, PhD, ARNP-BC, AOCNP®**

**Oncology Nursing Society  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

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# Contributors

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## EDITORS

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Lorraine K. McEvoy, DNP, MSN, RN, OCN®  
Nurse Leader, Ambulatory Services  
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center  
New York, New York  
*Chapter 2. Physiology of Aging and Its Impact on the Older Adult; Chapter 4. Symptom Management*

Diane G. Cope, PhD, ARNP-BC, AOCNP®  
Oncology Nurse Practitioner  
Florida Cancer Specialists  
Fort Myers, Florida  
*Chapter 1. Cancer and the Aging Population*

## AUTHORS

---

Stewart M. Bond, PhD, RN, AOCN®  
Research Assistant Professor  
Vanderbilt University School of Nursing  
Nashville, Tennessee  
*Chapter 2. Physiology of Aging and Its Impact on the Older Adult*

Kimberly A. Christopher, PhD, RN, OCN®  
Associate Professor and Chair  
Department of Nursing  
College of Health Professions  
Towson University  
Towson, Maryland  
*Chapter 6. Survivorship Issues*

Nessa Coyle, PhD, ANP, ACHPN, FAAN  
Nurse Practitioner, Pain and Palliative Care Service  
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center  
New York, New York  
*Chapter 5. Hospice and Palliative Care*

Mary Elizabeth Davis, RN, MSN, AOCNS®  
Clinical Nurse Specialist, Ambulatory Care Services  
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center  
New York, New York  
*Chapter 2. Physiology of Aging and Its Impact on the Older Adult; Chapter 4. Symptom Management*

Dana Marcone DeDonato, MSW, LSW  
Geriatric Oncology Social Work Specialist  
Joan Karnell Cancer Center at Pennsylvania Hospital  
Penn Medicine  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
*Chapter 7. Psychosocial Issues*

Susan A. Derby, RN, MA, GNP-BC, ACHPN  
Nurse Practitioner, Pain and Palliative Care Service  
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center  
New York, New York  
*Chapter 4. Symptom Management*

Sarah H. Kagan, PhD, RN  
Lucy Walker Honorary Term Professor of  
Gerontological Nursing  
Clinical Nurse Specialist  
Abramson Cancer Center  
University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
*Chapter 8. Considering the Future of Nursing*

Mary Pat Lynch, MSN, CRNP, AOCN®  
Nurse Practitioner and Cancer Center  
Administrator  
Joan Karnell Cancer Center at Pennsylvania  
Hospital  
Penn Medicine  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
*Chapter 7. Psychosocial Issues*

Janine A. Overcash, PhD, GNP-BC  
Director of Nursing Research  
James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research  
Institute  
The Ohio State University  
Columbus, Ohio  
*Chapter 3. Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment*

Kathy Plakovic, FNP, ACHPN, AOCNP®  
Nurse Practitioner, Pain and Palliative Care  
Service  
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center  
New York, New York  
*Chapter 5. Hospice and Palliative Care*

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The contributors provided the following disclosure and vested interest information:

Nessa Coyle, PhD, ANP, ACHPN, FAAN: Visiting Nurse Service of New York Hospice and Palliative Care, board member

Mary Elizabeth Davis, RN, MSN, AOCNS®: Genentech, consultant

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# Preface

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*Aging will create the music of the coming century.*

—Betty Friedan

The inspiration for this book came from the Oncology Nursing Society's (ONS's) forethought and recognition of the projected increase in the aging population and the need for specialization of geriatric oncology nursing in the future. In order to execute this vision, the ONS Gero-Oncology Think Tank Task Force met in December 2008, with the overall goal to create an organization-wide dedication to the special needs of older adults with cancer. Some of the task force's recommendations to support gero-oncology within ONS are as follows. The majority of these recommendations have been executed.

- Develop train-the-trainer gero-oncology regional workshops
- Develop a geriatric online course
- Ensure geriatric oncology content at future ONS conferences, including the ONS Advance Oncology Nursing Conference and ONS Annual Congress
- Dedicate the December 2009 *ONS Connect* issue to geriatrics
- Increase overall geriatric content on the ONS Web site
- Adapt oncology care competencies and the *Statement on the Scope and Standards of Oncology Practice* and the *Statement on the Scope and Standards of Advanced Practice Nursing in Oncology Nursing* to include geriatric-oncology perspectives
- Review ONS position statements for inclusion of gero-oncology perspectives
- Ensure that geriatric perspectives are included in existing and future educational materials and ONS Putting Evidence Into Practice resources
- Encourage geriatric-focused articles in the *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing* and *Oncology Nursing Forum*
- Support the development of an ONS Excellence in the Care of the Older Adult with Cancer Award in 2009.

Based on the work and recommendations of the Gero-Oncology Think Tank, the ONS Steering Committee continued discussions in an effort to identify additional areas for geriatric content and continue the development of ONS as a leader in geriatric oncology. From the work of both the Gero-Oncology Think Tank and the ONS Steering Committee, the development

of evidence-based guidelines for ambulatory geriatric-oncology nursing was proposed.

This book opens with an introduction of the projected increase in our aging population and cancer incidence in the older adult over the next two decades, and the increasing trends of healthcare delivery and oncology care in the ambulatory setting. Subsequent chapters provide detailed geriatric content, including physiology of aging, assessment, management of common symptoms related to oncologic therapy, hospice and palliative care, survivorship issues, and psychosocial issues. The book concludes with a chapter focused on the future of oncology nursing as it relates to the care of the older adult with cancer.

In the future, oncology nurses will not only need to specialize in the field of oncology, but will also need to specialize in the field of gerontology. This book is envisioned as a textbook presenting geriatric content, a resource for the ambulatory oncology nurse to meet the special needs of the older adult with cancer, and an additional source of geriatric oncology educational material that supports the ONS's mission to bring the care of older adults to the forefront of oncology nursing practice. Oncology nurses are in the key position to become leaders in the novel field of gerontology/oncology, surrounded by the music of the future.

Diane G. Cope, PhD, ARNP-BC, AOCNP®



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# Acknowledgments

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Today the experience of illness is not contained within hospital walls. Many people find that ambulatory care centers and their own homes have replaced the hospital setting at numerous points in their trajectory of illness. This is especially true when the illness is cancer. This book is the first large-scale effort to articulate clinical nursing practice and care management of older adults with cancer in the ambulatory setting. The project was truly a community effort. I am especially grateful to all of the authors who contributed their expertise to this work. I also wish to thank the friends and colleagues who reviewed drafts of the manuscript. They provided valuable ideas to improve the book.

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Lorraine McEvoy, DNP, MSN, RN, OCN®

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Diane G. Cope, PhD, ARNP-BC, AOCNP®

