CURRENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF NURSES IN CANCER CLINICAL TRIALS


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Introduction Clinical (bedside) nurses play a crucial role in supporting cancer patients in making decisions regarding clinical trials, but this role is currently not being fulfilled sufficiently. The purpose of this study was to clarify the current perceptions of clinical nurses regarding their role in cancer clinical trials.

Methods Nurses who participated in a study; ‘Development of Learning Program to Nurses Supporting Patients’ Decision Making in Cancer Clinical Trials’ were surveyed using an originally developed questionnaire (Kohara, 2023). Descriptive statistics of these responses were conducted using SPSS Statistics ver. 25.

Results The analysis included 101 nurses from two university hospitals in Japan, with a median clinical nursing experience of 12 years. 51% of the nurses worked for in-patient units. About half of the nurses reported experiencing the burden of communicating with patients in clinical trials, with the main reason being their inability to explain the trial properly due to insufficient understanding (36%). Furthermore, 90% of the nurses felt a lack of knowledge about clinical trials, and the fear of being able to provide proper answers to patient-nurse relationships (75%). Only 17% of nurses had the opportunity to be involved in caring for patients and making decisions regarding their participation in cancer clinical trials in the last three months.

Conclusion/Implications Clinical nurses play an important role in supporting patients’ decision-making process about participating in cancer clinical trials. However, their limited knowledge and burdens might hinder their nursing care, which calls for educational programs to improve their practice in clinical research nursing.