

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## Undergraduate nursing students' views on Oncology. A case study in Greece

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### Summary

**Purpose:** To investigate the views of undergraduate nursing students at the Patras Higher Technological Education Institution (HTEI), Greece, on the subject of Nursing Oncology, as well as their attitudes towards cancer.

**Methods:** In total, 105 students of the last year participated in the study. All participants were anonymously administered a specifically designed questionnaire including various educational and practical training aspects.

**Results:** Data analysis revealed inadequacies in Oncology education and highlighted the need for improving pre-clinical training and developing students' skills with regard to patients' care and the management of various psychologi-

cal and ethical issues. Furthermore, suggestions were made for increasing Oncology teaching staff, cooperation among subject specialists, increasing the hours devoted to Nursing Oncology, enhancing the basic and clinical courses, and introducing new subjects in the undergraduate curriculum.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, a well-organized Nursing Oncology education at the Nursing School of Patras HTEI should combine the theoretical background with practical training so as to prevent fragmentation of Oncology as an independent subject and its incorporation into other disciplines.

**Key words:** education, Greece, nursing oncology, students' views, undergraduate curriculum

### Introduction

Nursing is focusing on patient care, which requires academic knowledge, clinical work and interpersonal communication skills [1]. Care, which is the core and essence of nursing, should be the intended goal of everyday practice of clinical nurses, the main objective of educational programs and all initiatives taken by nursing institutions. Its practice requires knowledge, skills and the operation of a complex set of values closely related to the quality of health services [2].

The rapid scientific and technological developments normally have made the role of nursing more essential in the health sector, since nurses are able to contribute to a better management of cancer throughout the illness course, as are closer to the patient thanks to their profession. Consequently, the quality of health services is considerably related to the education of health service providers during their undergraduate

studies and throughout their subsequent service [2,3].

In recent years, coordinated efforts have been undertaken to improve the quality of education in the Nursing Schools of the Higher Technological Education Institutions (HTEI) in Greece [4]. According to curriculum guides of these Schools, emphasis is put on the educational training for the promotion of the individual health, the disease prevention and the provision of patient care. It is also clearly stated that undergraduate education should be aimed at preparing future nurses to be able to provide their services to Health Care Institutions and Organizations at the First, Second and Third Level. Overall, the undergraduate curricula of the Nursing Schools are designed and developed so as to impart the spirit and art of patient's care to students [1].

The undergraduate curriculum of Patras School of Nursing HTEI, in particular, includes core and elective subjects as well as clinical practice, which is carried

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