

## A proposal complementary leaflet of ostomies for Oncology nursing professionals

Propuesta de folleto complementario sobre ostomías para profesionales de Enfermería Oncológica

Proposta de cartilha complementar sobre estomias para profissionais de Enfermagem Oncológica

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** the general and specific knowledge of ostomies by the Oncology Nursing professional shows insufficiencies. It is imperative, therefore, to learn and develop skills to achieve optimal care for the ostomy patient. **Objective:** to prepare a complementary leaflet on ostomies for teaching and care aimed at Oncology Nursing professionals. **Method:** an observational, descriptive and cross-sectional research was carried out at the Hospital Oncológico Provincial Docente Conrado Benítez García in Santiago de Cuba, Cuba, in the two-month period July-August 2023. The universe consisted of the 106 Nursing professionals of the institution. Theoretical (analytical-synthetic, inductive-deductive and experiential), empirical (document analysis, survey and consultation with specialists) and statistical (descriptive statistics and percentage calculation) scientific research methods were combined. The selected variables measured the level of knowledge and Nursing skills in the care of

ostomized cancer patients. **Results:** there was evidence of insufficient knowledge and little development of skills in the care of ostomized cancer patients, corroborated by the questionnaire applied. A complementary brochure on ostomies was prepared to support the teaching and assistance of Oncology Nursing professionals in workplace education settings where specific care is provided to this type of patient. **Conclusions:** the complementary brochure on ostomies prepared is pertinent, since it has the structure and scientific coherence necessary for the teaching and assistance of the Nursing professional based on performance improvements.

**Keywords:** oncology nursing; ostomy; neoplasia; palliative care; cancer



**RESUMEN**

**Introducción:** el conocimiento general y específico de las ostomías por el profesional de Enfermería Oncológica muestra insuficiencias. Es imperativo, por tanto, el aprendizaje y desarrollo de habilidades para el logro del óptimo cuidado del paciente ostomizado. **Objetivo:** elaborar un folleto complementario sobre ostomías para la docencia y asistencia dirigido a los profesionales de Enfermería Oncológica. **Método:** se realizó una investigación observacional, descriptiva y transversal en el Hospital Oncológico Provincial Docente Conrado Benítez García de Santiago de Cuba, Cuba, en el bimestre julio-agosto de 2023. El universo estuvo constituido por los 106 profesionales de Enfermería de la institución. Se combinaron métodos de investigación científica teóricos (analítico-sintético, inductivo-deductivo y vivencial), empíricos (análisis documental, encuesta y consulta a especialistas) y estadísticos (estadística descriptiva y el cálculo porcentual). Las variables seleccionadas midieron el nivel de conocimientos y habilidades de Enfermería en el cuidado del paciente oncológico ostomizado. **Resultados:** se evidenció insuficiencia de conocimientos y poco desarrollo de habilidades en los cuidados del enfermo oncológico ostomizado, corroborado por el cuestionario aplicado. Se elaboró un folleto complementario sobre ostomías de apoyo a la docencia y asistencia de los profesionales de Enfermería Oncológica en los escenarios de educación en el trabajo donde se brindan los cuidados específicos a este tipo de paciente. **Conclusiones:** el folleto complementario sobre ostomías elaborado es pertinente, ya que cuenta con la estructura y coherencia científica necesarias para la docencia y asistencia del profesional de Enfermería en función de mejoras del desempeño.

**Palabras clave:** enfermería oncológica; ostomía; neoplasia; cuidados paliativos; cáncer

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**RESUMO**

**Introdução:** o conhecimento geral e específico sobre estomias pelo profissional de Enfermagem Oncológica apresenta insuficiências. É imperativo, portanto, aprender e desenvolver habilidades para alcançar o cuidado ideal ao paciente estomizado. **Objetivo:** elaborar um folheto complementar sobre estomias para ensino e assistência direcionado aos profissionais de Enfermagem Oncológica. **Método:** foi realizada uma pesquisa observacional, descritiva e transversal no Hospital Oncológico Provincial Docente Conrado Benítez García, em Santiago de Cuba, Cuba, no bimestre julho-agosto de 2023. O universo foi composto pelos 106 profissionais de Enfermagem da instituição. Foram combinados métodos de pesquisa científica teóricos (analítico-sintéticos, indutivos-dedutivos e experienciais), empíricos (análise documental, levantamento e consulta a especialistas) e estatísticos (estatística descriptiva e cálculo percentual). As variáveis selecionadas mediram o nível de conhecimento e habilidades de Enfermagem no cuidado ao paciente oncológico estomizado. **Resultados:** houve evidências de conhecimento insuficiente e pouco desenvolvimento de habilidades no cuidado ao paciente oncológico estomizado, corroborado pelo questionário aplicado. Foi elaborada uma cartilha complementar sobre estomias para apoiar o ensino e a assistência dos profissionais de Enfermagem Oncológica em ambientes de educação ocupacional onde são prestados cuidados específicos a este tipo de paciente. **Conclusões:** o folheto complementar sobre estomias elaborado é pertinente, pois possui estrutura e coerência científica necessárias ao ensino e assistência do profissional de Enfermagem com base na melhoria de desempenho.

**Palavras-chave:** enfermagem oncológica; ostomia; neoplasia; cuidados paliativos; câncer



## INTRODUCTION

Cancer is a complex disease that takes in more than 200 types and despite programs for early diagnosis, treatment and control, it still represents the second leading cause of death globally, after cardiovascular diseases. It constitutes a social health problem and, in Cuba, it is the disease that causes the most deaths in the 15-64 age group.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) indicates that by 2030, more than 160 million people will die of cancer.<sup>(1,2)</sup> In the last twenty years, it has been observed that the number of patients with malignancies who require an ostomy as the only palliative option is increasingly higher.

This type of terminally ill patient requires humanized nursing care, both in the hospital, in the doctor's office and the family nurse and finally at home.<sup>(3)</sup> Ostomies for the oncology patient represent a dramatic change of life with the usual physical, psychological and social consequences,<sup>(4)</sup> which require adaptation and care for a long time.

Nursing professionals represent a fundamental link in the chain of specialized care required by an ostomized oncologic patient. In this type of patient, the end of life will be more bearable if two fundamental issues are achieved: adaptability to the new body image and the proper functioning of the ostomy.

Specialized nursing care begins in the hospital. Initially, it is in the surgical unit where the palliative bypass procedure is performed. The technical steps in performing the stoma and the materials required must be the domain of instrumentalist and circulating nurses. Afterwards, ward nurses maintain vigilance for the detection of stoma functionability and viability problems.<sup>(5)</sup>

Once this complex patient is discharged, the specific care of the ostomy performed will be carried out at home. In Primary Health Care (PHC), the nursing professional is in charge of teaching ostomy self-care and instructs the patient, family member or caregiver about possible complications that may arise.

Advanced practice nursing is the quality care of the ostomized oncologic patient.<sup>(6,7)</sup> The basic knowledge acquired at the undergraduate level is complemented and updated at the postgraduate level. This knowledge can benefit from the development of various teaching resources, supported by the use of information and communication technologies (ICT)<sup>(8)</sup> for the design and dissemination among users.

Due to the importance of the topic and the necessary preparation of professionals in humanized care, the authors considered it is pertinent to elaborate a complementary booklet on ostomies that would contribute to the learning and development of specific skills in oncology nursing professionals, which is the objective of this research.



## METHOD

An observational, descriptive and transversal research was carried out at the Hospital Oncológico Provincial Docente Conrado Benítez García (HOPDCBG) of Santiago de Cuba, in the two-month period July-August 2023. The universe was constituted by 106 nursing professionals who work in the referred specialized health care center and who gave their consent to participate in the study.

The following variables were analyzed:

- Gender: classified as female or male.
- Time of graduation: classified into 1-5 years, 6 to 10 years, 11 to 15 years and more than 16 years (referring to the time spent working with this type of palliative oncology patient).
- Self-perception of nursing care performance with the ostomized patient: classified as prepared, partially prepared and not prepared (according to the professional's opinion of how to perform with this type of terminal oncologic patient).
- Level of knowledge of the Oncology Nursing professional on ostomies: classified as sufficient and insufficient, referring to theoretical and practical knowledge of all types of ostomies (based on the answers to the questionnaire elaborated on the subject in question).
- How specific ostomy knowledge and skills were obtained: classified as undergraduate or postgraduate (referring to undergraduate training or after graduation).

The following scientific research methods were combined:

From the theoretical level:

Analytical-synthetic: allowed the theoretical foundation, with the objective of exploring the knowledge and skills of the thematic approached.

Inductive-deductive: it made possible the inferences and deductions of the theoretical-practical elements for the elaboration of the complementary brochure, with the specifications regarding definition, indications, surgical technique, necessary material and complications of the procedure.

Experiential: it allowed the authors to identify learning needs through the evaluations of nursing performance with ostomized patients in the different circumstances of education at work (the surgical unit, in the emergency department and in the hospitalization wards for palliative care).

Empirical level:

Documentary analysis: it made possible the study of basic and updated medical and nursing literature, printed and digital, on the subject in question.

Survey: by means of a questionnaire applied to all the nursing professionals (N=106), it was possible to determine the level of knowledge and skills in ostomies. This questionnaire was designed by the main author of the research, who adapted the instrument to the subjects and the hospital context.



Consultation with specialists: this was used for the acceptance of the questionnaire and the relevance of the supplementary booklet. The six specialists consulted included: two surgeons with PhD in Medical Sciences, one surgeon with a PhD in Medical Education Sciences, one surgeon with a PhD in Education Sciences and two nursing graduates; all of them with main teaching category, master's degrees and with more than 20 years of experience in health care.

The questionnaire was validated for appearance and content according to Moriyama's basic criteria:<sup>(9)</sup> comprehensible, clearly defined components, with a justifiable theme, derived from feasible data and sensitive to variations. All the specialists rated the 10 questions of the Nursing questionnaire as Very essential; and the supplementary booklet as Very relevant.

For the collection of the primary data for this study, the questionnaire was applied to the entire series, deposited in the Zenodo open data repository (<https://zenodo.org/records/14826631>). This instrument comprised a total of ten questions on ostomies and their care.

The evaluation was qualitative according to the number of correct answers: Very good (10 answers), Good (8-9 answers), Fair (5-7 answers), Bad (2-4 answers) and Very bad (1 answer, no correct answer or unanswered questionnaire).

Thus, the level of ostomy knowledge of the nurses was classified as: Sufficient if the questionnaire was evaluated as Very Good or Good, and Insufficient if it was evaluated as Fair, Poor or Very Poor.

The results of the evaluation of the questionnaire made it possible to identify insufficiencies in the knowledge and development of practical nursing care skills on the subject. Thus, the hospital's need for a complementary booklet on ostomies was demonstrated.

All the nursing professionals (users of the didactic resource developed) and the six specialists evaluated the booklet in writing, via WhatsApp. The decision rule for the evaluation included: Very adequate, Adequate, Not adequate and Inadequate according to the following variables:

- Thematic scientificity.
- Organization of the content.
- Surgical terminology.
- Usefulness for learning and skills.
- Quality of the images.
- Facility for nursing care work in the three levels of health care.

For the statistical analysis, absolute and relative frequencies were used as summary measures for all variables. It was performed with the IBM SPSS v.23 statistical package and the results were expressed in tables.

The research was approved by the scientific council of the hospital. The consent and active voluntary collaboration of the participants was obtained. Confidentiality and safekeeping of the questionnaires were maintained.



## RESULTS

All the Oncology Nursing professionals were surveyed, 106 (100.00 %). The 92.46 % were women and 7.54 % were men. The female gender predominated and nurses with a time of graduates between 11 to 15 years (37.4 %), followed by the group of more than 16 years as can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1: Distribution according to gender and time of graduation in years**

Time of graduation	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1 a 5	23	21,69	7	6,60	30	22,90
6 a 10	10	9,44	1	0,94	11	8,40
11 a 15	40	37,74	-	-	40	<b>37,40</b>
More than 16	25	23,59	-	-	25	31,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>92,46</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7,54</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100,00</b>

Source: questionnaire.

Table 2 shows the predominance of the insufficient level of knowledge of the Oncology Nursing professional about ostomies in 84% of the series, which corresponded to the basic knowledge and the few skills for the care of this type of patient, learned in the undergraduate course. It should be noted that knowledge is also insufficient even in nurses more than 11 years after graduation, since they have worked in hospital wards that do not provide care to ostomized patients, for example, in radiotherapy or chemotherapy, as well as in outpatient care.

**Table 2: Distribution according the level of knowledge on ostomy**

Time of graduation	Adequate		Insufficient		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1 a 5	-	-	30	28,3	30	28,3
6 a 10	-	-	11	10,3	11	10,3
11 a 15	12	11,3	28	26,4	40	37,7
More than 16	5	4,7	20	19,0	25	23,7
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16,0</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>84,0</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Source: questionnaire.

Sixteen percent of the nursing staff surveyed considered themselves prepared for the specific care of an ostomized patient (for all types of ostomies), (Table 3). This corresponded to the 6 ward chiefs, 4 surgical unit nurses and 7 nursing managers, all of them with teaching status and experience in teaching the subject.



**Table 3:** Distribution according to self-perception of care performance with the ostomized patient

Prepared		Partially prepared		Not prepared		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
-	-	30	28,3	-	-	30	28,3
-	-	11	10,3	-	-	11	10,3
12	11,3	28	26,4	-	-	40	37,7
5	4,7	20	19,0	-	-	25	23,7
17	<b>16,0</b>	89	84,0	-	-	106	100,0

Source: questionnaire.

These were obtained from the questionnaire applied and evidenced that the need for learning about the subject was identified not only in graduates with a few years of graduation. Thus, the need for deepening, complementation and updating of knowledge and the development of skills in the specific care of oncological patients with this type of palliative surgical treatment was demonstrated.

Eighty-four percent (84,0%) considered themselves prepared for the specific care of patients with colostomies and tracheostomies, due to the greater frequency of presentation in daily practice of this type of procedure, but not for the rest of the ostomies. Hence, the researchers identified in the evaluation of the applied questionnaire the need to elaborate a complementary booklet that explains what concerns all types of existing ostomies.

Table 4 shows that 89.7% of the oncology nursing staff acknowledged that, once graduated, the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills have been possible when placed in the palliative care ward and in the surgical unit. Such on-the-job education scenarios are the places where the greatest number of patients with the different ostomies is attended and therefore, where optimal professional performance is required.

**Table 4:** Distribution according to acquisition of knowledge and skills in ostomies

Respondents(N=106)	At undergraduate level		At postgraduate level		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	11	10,37	95	<b>89,70</b>	106	100,00

Source: questionnaire.

The 100% of the oncology nursing professionals surveyed considered it important for the hospital to have this type of teaching support material.

Table 5 shows the results of the survey carried out among the nursing professionals of the hospital and specialists consulted. All of them rated the digital supplementary booklet on ostomies as very adequate, which showed its relevance.



**Table 5:** Evaluation of the complementary brochure on ostomies according to the criteria of the nursing professionals and specialists consulted

Qualitative variable	Nursing Professionals				Specialists consulted			
	VA	A	PA	I	VA	A	PA	I
Scientific content	106	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Content organization	106	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Surgical terminology	106	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Utility for learning and skills	106	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Quality of images	106	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ease of use for nursing care work	106	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Legend:** MA: Very adequate; A: Adequate; PA: Poorly adequate; I: Inadequate.

The positive assessment of the complementary brochure was based on the qualitative variables mentioned, on the easy distribution among users through the communicative network WhatsApp and on the easy use with the support of mobile telephony, tablets and computers when needed.

This booklet provides general and subject-specific information for Oncology Nursing professionals (<https://zenodo.org/records/14840976>). It complies with the principle of permanent and continuous training, thus contributing to improvements in the professional and human performance of Nursing with the ostomized patient.

## DISCUSSION

Due to the increase in the number of ostomized oncologic patients worldwide,<sup>(7)</sup> it is necessary for nursing professionals to complement the knowledge acquired and develop specific skills in this important topic. This is the only way to achieve advanced practices in the humanized care of this complex patient.<sup>(10,11)</sup>

The insufficiencies of knowledge about ostomies identified, evidenced an epistemic gap between the magnitude of the social health problem and the training of nursing professionals for the care of the ostomized oncologic patient. On the one hand, this content is addressed without the necessary depth in the undergraduate curriculum and, on the other hand, in the searches conducted by the researchers, a compilation document of all ostomies has not been found; hence, the relevance of this didactic resource.

According to the works of Prieto, et al.<sup>(11)</sup> and Rodriguez,<sup>(12)</sup> the ostomized patient requires continuous care by nursing, including: the characteristics of the stoma, the skin covering it, signs of local infection, correct functioning, 24-hour debit, self-care advice and detection of complications.

Lascano, et al.<sup>(13)</sup> emphasize that in medical education, ICTs allow teachers to create didactic resources for the solution of identified learning needs. Thus, a monothematic complementary booklet has been designed for the solution of a nursing problem in hospital practice, generalized for other health contexts and supported by mobile telephony.





Oria, et al.<sup>(14)</sup>, Perilla, et al.<sup>(15)</sup> affirm that permanent and continuous nursing training for palliative care of oncology patients is a obligatory process; even more in an oncology hospital. This includes the complementation of knowledge acquired in undergraduate studies without the necessary deepening and the development of specific skills as a guarantee of advanced practice in care.

One of the limitations of this research is that the brochure was made according to learning needs identified in the aforementioned hospital, knowing that the scientific problem addressed exists in other hospitals and in Primary Health Care. Another is that not all types of ostomies are frequently practiced; hence, the motivation with this didactic resource for self-preparation in the care of all ostomies.

## CONCLUSIONS

The complementary booklet on ostomies is pertinent, since it has the structure and scientific coherence necessary for teaching and assisting the nursing professional in order to improve performance.

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**Conflicts of interest:**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

**Authors' contribution:**

Iliana Guerra Macias: conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, research, methodology, supervision, validation, visualization, statistical processing, original draft-writing, drafting-revising and editing.

Lisandra Salinas Mora: data curation, formal analysis, research, validation, writing-revision and editing.

Karina Miguel Cabrera: research, validation, writing-revising and editing.

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**Complementary file (Open Data):**

[Cuestionario sobre ostomías para Enfermería aplicado](#)

[Folleto complementario sobre ostomías para profesionales de Enfermería Oncológica](#)

