

Baseline standards for paediatric oncology nursing care in low and middle-income countries:

Position statement of the SIOP PODC Nursing Working Group (*endorsed by the Board of SIOP*)

The majority of children with cancer live in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), and their chances of survival are often less than 20%. The vision of the International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP) is that no child should die of cancer, which it strives toward by improving access to treatment and care globally. The SIOP PODC Nursing Working Group has developed 6 baseline global standards for nursing care, published in 2014*. The standards can be summarised as follows:

Standard 1: Staffing plans based on patient acuity. A nurse to patient ratio of 1:5 for paediatric oncology units and 1:2 for critical care and transplant units is recommended. Nurses trained and experienced in oncology should remain within the service and not rotate.

Standard 2: A formalized paediatric oncology orientation programme for new nurses. A minimum of 2 weeks theory/skills training in key topic areas and 3-4 weeks clinical observation is required.

Standard 3: Continuing education and training to increase paediatric oncology clinical skills and knowledge. A minimum of 10 hours a year is recommended.

Standard 4: Acknowledgment of nurses as core members of the multidisciplinary paediatric oncology team. A nurse should be included in patient rounds and all meetings with patients and parents/caregivers regarding diagnosis and treatment plans.

Standard 5: Available resources for safe paediatric oncology care. These include intravenous pumps and hand washing facilities. Nurses should prepare chemotherapy drugs only if a pharmacist is not available and when provided with personal protective equipment.

Standard 6: Evidence-based paediatric oncology nursing policies and procedures to guide the delivery of quality nursing care. Because of the lack of nursing research in LMICs, funding for locally directed research is the next step to creating relevant nursing policies and procedures.

*Day S, Hollis R, Challinor J, Bevilacqua G, Bosomprah E (2014) SIOP PODC Nursing Working Group. Baseline standards for paediatric oncology nursing care in low to middle income countries: position statement of the SIOP PODC Nursing Working Group. *Lancet Oncol.* 2014; 15(7):681-682

These baseline standards will be reviewed in 2017.

