

Joint Event on
33rd International Conference on
ONCOLOGY NURSING AND CANCER CARE
and
16th ASIA PACIFIC PATHOLOGY CONGRESS
September 17-18, 2018 Tokyo Japan

Introducing the role of the advanced clinical practitioner in oncology and hematology

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In 2015 the hematology and oncology directorate introduced the role of the Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP). A nurse practitioner with an extensive background within the specialty was tasked with setting up the service and also employed a trainee ACP to further complement the service. The initial aim of the service was to gain further academic qualifications to undertake the role as well as gain competency in clinical procedures previously undertaken by the medical team. Both ACPs completed the Post Graduate Certificate in Advanced Clinical Practice at Warwick Medical School and as they had both already obtained MSc programs and were qualified non-medical prescribers this was the only academic work required. Procedure competency was required to undertake lumbar punctures, bone marrow biopsies, PICC line insertions and Hickman line removals. Both ACPs were required to maintain chemotherapy administration and apheresis competencies. The trainee ACP focused primarily on setting up hematology clinics whilst the senior ACP set up clinics in oncology in Birmingham and hematology in the Channel Islands. Within 12 months of setting up the service the trainee ACP achieved all her competencies and both ACPs are undertaking procedures autonomously, running clinics, prescribing chemotherapy, reviewing patients presenting unwell and function at an advanced level within the MDT. Not without its challenges, yet hugely rewarding plans are already afoot to learn further procedures and expand the team to work in both the in-patient setting as well as the primary care setting to deliver stem cell transplants in patient's own home.

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