Development of an Oncology Nursing Competency Scale for General Professional Nurses in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

In Thailand, cancer patients and their families are mostly cared for in the hospital by general professional nurses who have limited specialist training and continuing nursing education. To develop their abilities to provide quality care, an oncology nursing competency needs to be assessed by using a valid and reliable scale. This study aimed to develop an Oncology Nursing Competency Scale (ONCS) for Thai general professional nurses and to test its psychometric properties. The scale development includes two phases. In the first phase, a definition of oncology nursing competency was created based on reviewed literature. Then, the dimensions and items were generated in the Thai language, resulting in the initial draft of the ONCS, which is a 5-point rating scale consisting of six subscales with 73 items. The initial scale was reviewed by a panel of experts and then revised as suggested. The CVI of the revised 81-item scale was 0.98; the alpha coefficient of the overall scale was 0.98 and of six subscales ranging from 0.84 to 0.96. In the second phase, the psychometric properties of the revised scale were evaluated with 769 general professional nurses. The item analysis revealed that all items were good discriminators. To test construct validity, factor analysis was performed resulting in ten components with 79 items that explained 74.54% of the variance. The alpha coefficient of the ten components ranged from .87 to .98 and of the entire scale was .98. The final scale with 79 items was tested for construct validity using the contrast group approach. The findings showed significant differences of the mean competency scores between the group of experienced nurses and the group of nursing students (p < .001).

Keywords: Scale development, Competency, Oncology nursing, General professional nurses