

## **Introducing an acuity-based nurse assignment tool in inpatient oncology and haemato-oncology units.**

The rapid increase in the number of cancer patients and the complexity of care situations, respectively, increase the workload of oncology nurses. This complexity is the result of several converging factors such as the age of patients associated with physical, functional and cognitive weaknesses, multiple comorbidities, an increase in the side effects of medications and psychosocial support needs. Moreover, according to the research results, the increase in the complexity of treatments and the explosion of knowledge defy the supply of nursing care. Without appropriate management action, a significant workload has been identified as a major cause of job dissatisfaction, burnout and therefore may reduce patient safety as well as quality of care. An equitable distribution of the workload should reduce these risks during a shift.

An approach to measuring patient care needs is the measurement of acuity. The Oncology Acuity Tool (OAT) is a tool to quantify the severity of the disease (in terms of physical and psychological status) of the patient and the intensity of nursing care, (in terms of care needs, workload and complexity of care required by the patient). The OAT is used by nurses to assess prospectively, in less than one minute, before each shift, patients acuity. The division of work can be based on the acuity score. Therefore, it should allow a fair distribution of patients between nurses according to the acuity score. To date, the feasibility and acceptability of OAT has not been investigated in oncology and haemato-oncology units in Switzerland.

The overall objective of the PhD is to assess the feasibility of OAT based assignments in hospitalized oncology and haematology-oncology units in three hospitals in French-speaking Switzerland.

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