

Oncologist A Life Saver

Natasha White

Southern Technical College

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Cancer is the leading cause of death around the world (The Huffington Post, 2011). Each year the number of cancer patients rises as 12.7 million people discover they have cancer (The Huffington Post, 2011). These numbers are seriously concerning. Let's consider the word cancer for a moment, cancer is a general name applied to a group of over one hundred diseases, the one thing these diseases have in common is that they form from abnormal cell growth (American Cancer Society, Inc. , 2014). Any cancer left untreated can cause serious illness and death (American Cancer Society, Inc. , 2014). Cancer cell growth is significantly different than normal cell growth (American Cancer Society, Inc. , 2014). Instead of the typical cell cycle, i.e. a cell dying when it should, cancer cells continue to grow and form new, abnormal cells (American Cancer Society, Inc. , 2014). Cells become cancerous because of deoxyribonucleic acid or DNA damage (American Cancer Society, Inc. , 2014). DNA damage is caused by mistakes that happen while the cell is reproducing other cells or by something within the environment (American Cancer Society, Inc. , 2014). For example, obvious environmental factors that have been known to cause cancer include cigarette smoking and sun exposure (American Cancer Society, Inc. , 2014). Not all types of cancers can be prevented and often it is unclear what fully caused a patient's cancer to grow, besides the abnormal cell growth. Although these facts seem daunting, it is important to point out the cancer survival rate has increased with more understanding of specific cancers, advances in medicine and technologies, and the increasing knowledge of doctors (The Huffington Post, 2011). **Considering the number of diagnosed cancer patients per year, it becomes important to know what types of doctors treat cancer patients, what are the qualifications and standards expected of these doctors.**

The highlighted sentence above is the thesis statement. This is the most important sentence in your paper because it explains to the reader why and what you are writing about. Your thesis is not highlighted like this example, but you need to have one.

Well, when it comes to cancer there is a special kind of doctor called to the forefront to help combat and treat the disease. That special type of doctor is known as an Oncologist. A fancy name for a fancy doctor no doubt. Oncology is the study and treatment of cancer and an Oncologist is a doctor who specializes in studies and treatments of cancer (American Society of Clinical Oncology, 2015). However, there are three main types of Oncologist: medical, surgical, and radiation (Cancer.net Education Board, 2013). A Medical Oncologist specializes in treating cancer with chemotherapy, and other medications (Cancer.net Education Board, 2013). An example of this is using targeted therapy and oral chemotherapy (Cancer.net Education Board, 2013). A Surgical Oncologist specializes in the removal of the tumors and surrounding tissues during operation, and performs biopsies if needed (Cancer.net Education Board, 2013). Finally, a Radiation Oncologist specializes in treating cancer with radiation therapy (Cancer.net Education Board, 2013). The American Association of Clinical Oncology also recognizes other types of Oncologist as well. This includes Gynecologic Oncologist, which focuses on the care and treatment of women, with gynecologic cancers, such as uterine and cervical cancer (Cancer.net Education Board, 2013). A pediatric oncologist specializes in the treatment of cancer in children (Cancer.net Education Board, 2013). Finally, a Hematologist-Oncologist specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of cancers in the blood, such as leukemia's, lymphomas, and myelomas (Cancer.net Education Board, 2013).

Essentially, Oncologists are very well-educated doctors who specialize in treating multiple types of cancers with the goal of saving patient's lives. It really helps that Oncologists go through rigorous training along with their many years of education before they ever see a patient. The education and training for a career in this scope of practice, requires an additional five years of training in internal medicine and oncology, once they have completed

undergraduate coursework and medical school (Kelcher, n.d.). Oncologist must complete the undergraduate and medical school training for physicians (Kelcher, n.d.). Applicants for medical school usually complete a four year degree, or bachelor's degree emphasized on science to compete for a position in medical school (Kelcher, n.d.). Applicants for medical must compete and submit scores from the Medical College Admissions Test to meet application requirements (Kelcher, n.d.). While in medical school, they will study subjects such as anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, psychology, and pharmacology (Kelcher, n.d.). The last two years of medical school consist of rotations throughout a hospital (Kelcher, n.d.). This is so the students get some experience in various fields of medicine, while under the supervision of trained physicians (Kelcher, n.d.). The physician now must obtain a certification in internal medicine, prior to applying for board certification in Oncology (Kelcher, n.d.). While in the residency, physicians demonstrate their knowledge in the field by explaining procedures, techniques, indications, contraindications, pain management, sterile techniques, and how competent they are in the field (Kelcher, n.d.). The American Board of Internal Medicine requires physicians to complete a three-year residency program in internal medicine to qualify for the certification examination (Kelcher, n.d.). The American Board of internal Medicine also requires physicians who have completed an oncology residency program, to demonstrate their clinical competence, pass a certification examination in medical oncology, and hold a valid physician's license (Kelcher, n.d.). The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that employment opportunities for physicians and surgeons are expected to grow by a faster-than-average rate of eighteen percent nationwide between the years 2012 and 2022 (Education Portal, 2015). According to the United States bureau of Labor Statistics, the average annual salary for surgeons and physicians was one

hundred-eighty four thousand, eight hundred-twenty dollars as of May 2012 (Education Portal, 2015).

Cancer is always a scary word and often makes patients feel hopeless and possibly confused at even hearing the word. Especially considering that the word cancer is an all-encompassing term used to describe over a hundred different diseases that can begin almost anywhere in the body and its' tissues (American Society of Clinical Oncology, 2015). It is important that Oncologist make patients feel comfortable and informed. The American Association of Clinical Oncology believes that an Oncologist is responsible for the care of a patient from the moment the cancer diagnosis, and throughout the course of their disease (Cancer.net Education Board, 2013). Some of the responsibilities that an Oncologist has includes, but is not limited to: explaining the cancer diagnosis and stage of cancer to the patient, discussing all of the treatment options and recommending the best course of treatment, delivering high-quality, compassionate care, and helping maintain the patient's quality of life by managing the cancer-related pain and other symptoms or treatment side-effects, such as constipation, nausea, vomiting, and fatigue (Cancer.net Education Board, 2013).

Cancer is a serious disease within the world that is not going away anytime soon. This year alone 12.7 million people will be diagnosed. The doctors on the front-line trying to save patients afflicted with cancer are Oncologist. Oncology is a much needed profession; it is projected that the need for Oncologist will increase by 18% by the year 2022. This is most in part due to the overwhelming amount of people who will be diagnosed with cancer and in need of an Oncologist. Oncologists are a very specialized profession, requiring years of training and residency. There are many forms of specialization within the field of Oncology that only goes to benefit patients stricken with one of the many cancers. It can be stated that Oncologists are much

appreciated by their patient's and many survivors of cancer would most certainly consider Oncologists as life savers.

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