

Alison Haegler, MSN, RN, OCN; Dayna Leis, AGPCNP-BC, OCN; Cassandra Light, RN BSN

Background

Solutions and Methods

Outcomes

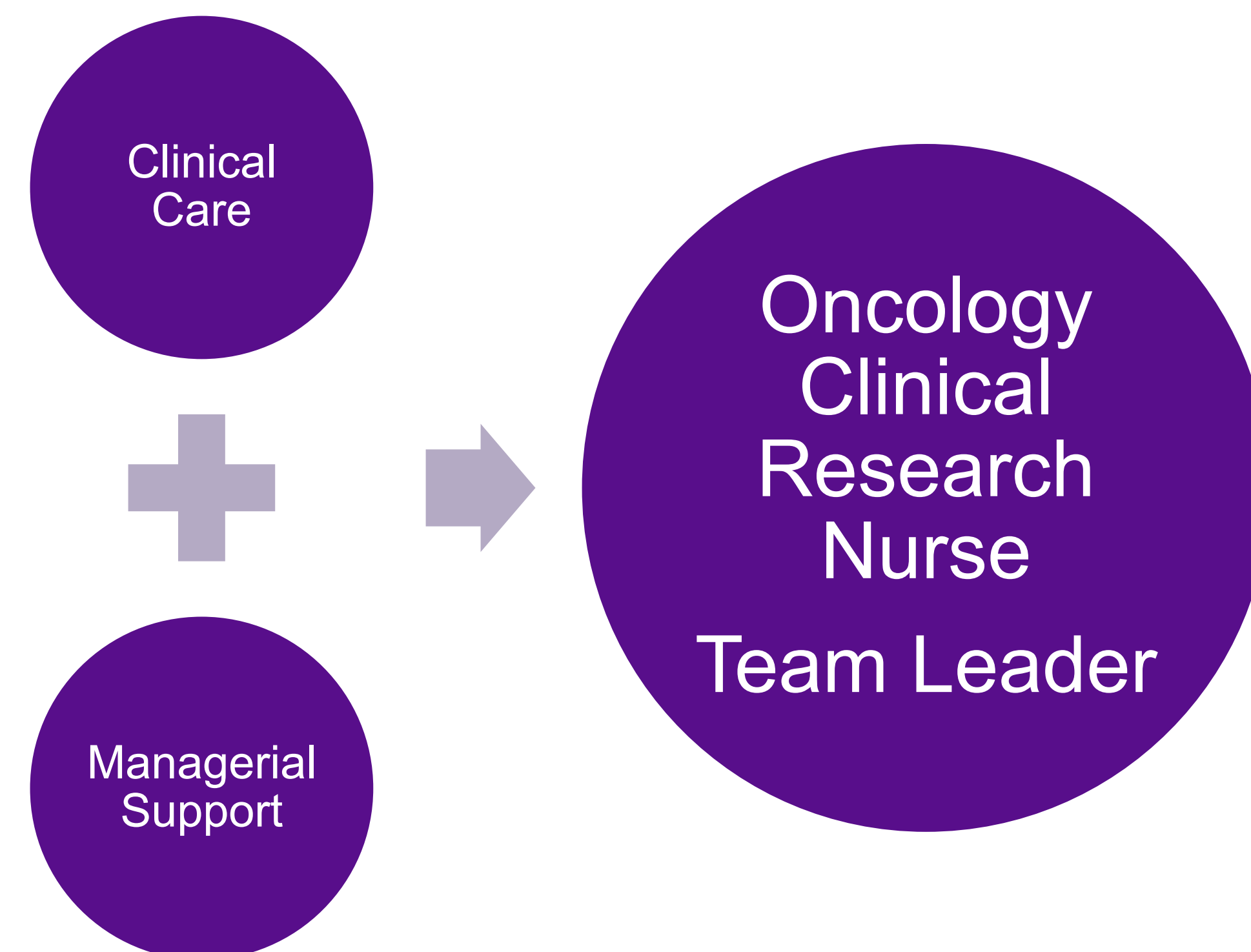
Creating and maintaining sufficient management support can be challenging as clinical research programs grow in staff and size. With the expansion of our trial portfolio came the need to increase clinical staffing ratios, which subsequently outgrew and taxed managerial oversight capabilities. We initially revised the Clinical Trials Office (CTO) organizational chart to include three additional nurse managers, however interest among senior staff was limited and two of the positions remained unfilled for approximately seven months. A common theme emerged, namely, a desire to continue clinical practice. Taking this feedback from senior staff, a new position of Team Lead was created and added as an additional step in the research nurse career ladder.

The team lead role has been designed to keep patient care as a priority and on average provides approximately 75% clinical time, including but not limited to oversight of on treatment clinical trial patients. In addition, approximately 25% of time is allotted for managerial support. The management related tasks include one to one check-ins with other clinical research nurses, vacation approvals, interviewing potential hires, disease management group check-ins, annual reviews, as well as attending management meetings and spearheading process improvement initiatives.

In the last fiscal year we created and filled four Team Lead positions, allowing senior clinical research nurses the opportunity to advance, gain managerial experience, and continue clinical practice. By remaining engaged in direct patient care nurses stay attuned to evolving practices, sharpen proficiency in clinical skills, and lead by example for our team members. Regular involvement also fosters rapport with staff, enhances communication, and allows for firsthand observation of challenges and opportunities for improvement within the clinic. The commitment to ongoing clinical involvement not only strengthens nursing leadership effectiveness but also ensures the delivery of high-quality patient care. By providing tailored guidance, resources, and feedback the team leads empower staff members to excel in their roles and achieve their career aspirations.

Goals

The team lead role is designed to allow senior oncology clinical research nurses to gain management experience while continuing clinical care by closely supporting staff and fostering professional growth and success within the organization.



Lessons Learned and Future Directions

Despite the relatively recent roll out for the Team Lead role, the combined collaboration with upper leadership and maintained connection with clinical care has allowed for open dialogue between all staff members regarding new workflows and process improvements. This opportunity has allowed for shared learning experiences among all team members within our organizational chart. The Team Lead role allows for senior clinical research nurses to share their experience, provide a level of expertise, and support staff in their career advancement. We believe by investing in the development and support of our team, we strengthen the entire organization, leading to improved patient care outcomes and sustained success.