

GUIDING NURSE NAVIGATORS THROUGH THE PRECISION MEDICINE PATHWAY

Precision medicine is a rapidly evolving area of cancer care, and oncology nurse and patient navigators are often called upon to support patients predisposed to and diagnosed with cancer and facilitate the genetic and genomic testing process. This tool is intended to help support oncology navigators build upon their knowledge of precision medicine and its potential impact on treatment decision-making throughout the cancer journey.

BEGIN



NURSE NAVIGATOR PRECISION MEDICINE ROADMAP

Biopsy Referral by Medical Oncologist¹

Nurse Navigator Considerations:

- i. Assist with obtaining family history and building a patient history
- ii. Explain the usual course of care, including tests ordered, how results affect next steps, and the importance of waiting for test results
- iii. Address patient concerns regarding insurance coverage and connect them with a financial navigator/social worker

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Biospecimen Collection by Surgical Oncologist¹

Nurse Navigator Considerations:

- i. Facilitate and coordinate sample collection process
- ii. Inform patient about pre-procedure preparations
- iii. Collaborate with the care team to ensure test results are tracked, recorded, and implemented for treatment decisions



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Biopsy Evaluation by Pathologist

Nurse Navigator Consideration:

- i. Review evaluation of biopsy sample for quantity/quality and staging



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Germline and/or Biomarker (Somatic) Test Ordering by Medical Oncologist

Germline Testing

Analyzes an individual's DNA to identify inherited genetic mutations or variations

Used to assess the risk of genetic disorders, hereditary conditions, or identify carrier status

Conducted on blood or saliva in most cases

Biomarker Testing

Focuses on mutations or alterations occurring in a patient's tumor or affected tissues that can change over time

Identifies specific genetic mutations or biomarkers that may guide targeted therapy, immunotherapy, or clinical trial selection

Conducted on tissue (IHC, NGS tests) and/or blood or other bodily fluid sample (ctDNA)



Nurse Navigator Considerations:

- i. Support MD or APP provider in ordering process for somatic testing
- ii. Provide patient educational materials on basic germline/biomarker testing concepts for improved understanding
- iii. Realize when germline/biomarker testing is appropriate
- iv. Understand and explain how testing may impact individual patient treatment planning and follow-up
- v. Review and obtain informed consent for germline/biomarker testing
- vi. Facilitate timely and efficient diagnostic and germline/biomarker testing for all patients at each line of therapy
- vii. Apprise patient of expected time frame to receive germline and biomarker test results: *2-3 weeks minimum on average from the time sample is received by a lab. Some STAT tests (eg, BRCA1/2) can be available as soon as 5-10 days*
- viii. Identify local cancer genetics professionals
- ix. Maintain current knowledge of germline/biomarker testing options, vendor portals, and patient test results
- x. Coordinate financial support to assess germline/biomarker testing insurance coverage
- xi. Review billing process and potential out-of-pocket costs for testing or option for financial assistance

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Germline/Biomarker Test Results

Nurse Navigator Considerations:

- i. Share results with the care team and patient
- ii. Explain the pathology and germline/biomarker test results to the patient and address any questions or concerns
- iii. Convey the findings and the potential implications test results may have to the patient's treatment plan
- iv. Provide patient with educational resources based on results
- v. Facilitate the referral process for patient genetic counseling, if appropriate
- vi. Help patients formulate questions to ask their providers about inherited and non-inherited mutations
- vii. Assist with scheduling family members for cascade testing as indicated (germline testing only)



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Germline/Biomarker Test Result Reporting

Nurse Navigator Consideration:

- i. Inform care team of reporting errors, outdated or missing clinical information, etc

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Treatment Decision

Based on diagnosis and germline and/or biomarker test results, targeted therapy may be appropriate¹

Nurse Navigator Considerations:

- i. Become knowledgeable of targeted treatment options and associated contraindications, side effects, and adverse event management
- ii. Encourage patients to participate in their treatment decisions
- iii. Assess patient values, goals, preferences, and any financial barriers
- iv. Utilize the “Teach-back method” to gauge patient understanding of their test results and treatment implications
- v. Provide patients with educational materials to help make informed decisions about their treatment choices



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Follow-Up

Nurse Navigator Considerations:

- i. Assist with cascade testing for pathogenic variants from germline testing for inherited risk
- ii. Advise of potential additional biopsy and/or blood draws for biomarker testing at follow-up visits
- iii. Reinforce the importance of additional biomarker testing at disease progression
- iv. Facilitate biomarker testing for all patients at disease progression
- v. Reinforce appropriate care plan modifications based on biomarker test results



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For more information and patient resources, scan the QR code



Reference:

1. Precision Medicine Toolkit: A Resource Guide for the Navigator 2023. Accessed February 15, 2024. <https://aononline.org/toolkits>