

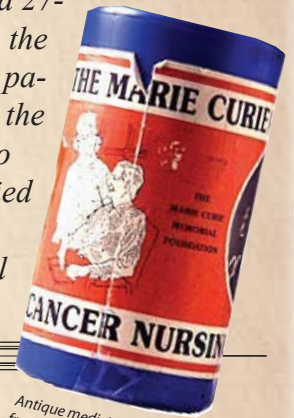
# Windows in Time



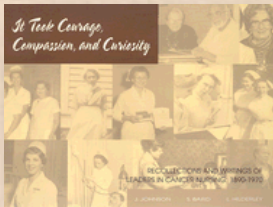
Photo from National Library of Medicine

Early literature on oncology nursing is difficult to uncover because few books and articles were written on this subject before World War I. Routine nurse's notes were destroyed because they were seen as having no value. During the late 1800's and early 1900's Lady Supervisors managed hospitals where uneducated and poor women worked as "nurses." Lady Supervisors, usually wealthy society women, objected strongly about hospital admissions for those with cancer. Patients with cancer "caused extreme annoyance and suffering to other patients, they were contagious, especially those with gynecological cancer, and they usually died within three days." An example of this care is notation of a 27-year-old female with breast cancer who was admitted to the hospital for a radical mastectomy. Prior to surgery, the patient fainted. The house officer was called and ordered the nurse to pour whiskey under the patient's mouth and to inject whiskey under the patient's skin. The patient died within a few minutes.

by Patricia Buchsel  
RN, MSN, FAAN



Antique medicine container from the Marie Curie Institute



*It Took Courage, Compassion and Curiosity - Recollections and Writings of Leaders in Cancer Nursing, 1890 - 1970.*

## Firsts in Oncology Treatment

