

The Effect of Palliative Care Nursing Education to Improve Knowledge in Palliative Care of Hospital-Based Nurses Caring for Patients with Chronic, Serious Illness

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Background

Palliative care nursing provides care for the relief of pain and suffering throughout the course of a patient's chronic, serious illness.

Hospital-based nurses need to be equipped with palliative care nursing knowledge to provide optimal care for these patients and their families to improve the quality of life.

The lack of education in pain and symptom management and communication about goals of care can result in suboptimal and high cost of care.

Objective

To determine if a brief palliative care nursing education can improve the knowledge of hospital-based nurses about palliative care nursing.

Hypothesis

A brief palliative care nursing education will improve nurses' knowledge related to care of patients with chronic, serious illness receiving palliative care in the hospital setting.

Methods

Sample

Convenience sample of 73 hospital-based nurses working in oncology (n=26); geriatric (n=24); and medical-surgical (n=23) units.

Setting

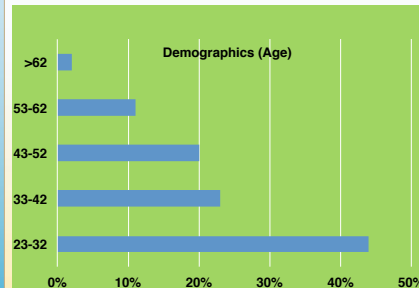
Suburban hospital in Northeastern region of U.S.

Research Design

- Cross-sectional quantitative pre-posttest design
- 40-minute palliative care nursing education program served as intervention
- Pretest and posttest comparison for improvement
- Palliative Care Quiz for Nursing (PCQN) knowledge assessment in palliative care nursing
- Contents of a brief palliative care nursing education were adapted from a well-known textbook in palliative nursing and national consensus curriculum in palliative care nursing.

Data Analysis Plan

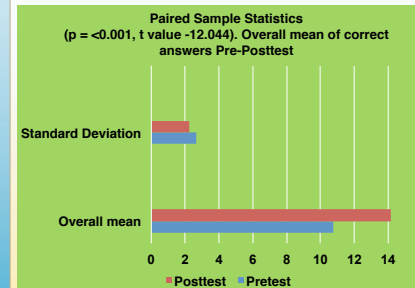
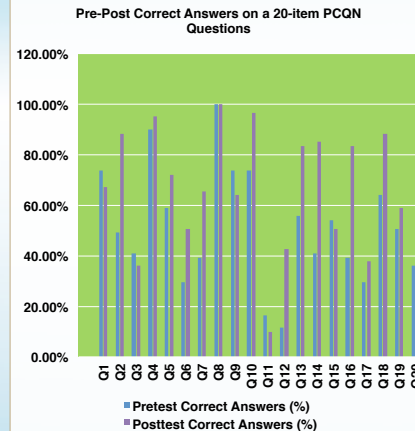
- Percentage was used to describe the demographics (age, gender, religion, highest nursing education, years of nursing work experience, previous palliative care experience, and palliative care education)
- Descriptive statistics was used to tabulate the pretest and posttest correct answers for each 20-item PCQN questions
- Level of significance for each question was tabulated using McNemar's test.
- Paired *t*-test was used to analyze the overall differences between a pretest and posttest.



Results

Out of 73 nurses selected, 61 (83.5%) were able to participate in a brief palliative care nursing education.

- Paired *t*-test compared pretest and posttest scores (*t*-value of -12.044, *P* < 0.001, *df* = 60) with highly significant finding that a brief palliative care nursing education was effective in improving nurses' knowledge in palliative care.
- The overall mean of correct answers on pretest was 10.75, standard deviation of 2.67.
- The overall mean of correct answers on the posttest was 14.15 with a standard deviation of 2.23.



Conclusions

Nurses' knowledge in palliative care improved after a brief palliative care nursing education. This finding can be instrumental to improve nursing practice and to improve the quality of life of patients with chronic serious illness. It was recommended that palliative care nursing education should be included as part of a continuing education for nurses.

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