

Case Report

The Effect of Education in Palliative and End of Life Care on the Knowledge and Attitude of Nurses from Selected Hospitals, Kerala

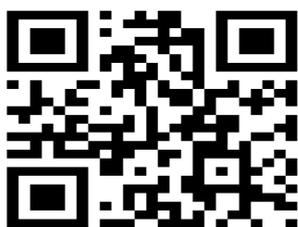
Sr Lilly Joseph, Simple Rajagopal, Dhivya Joseph

Lourdes College Of Nursing, Ernakulam, Kerala (India)

ABSTRACT

Pre experimental pretest- post test study was done to assess the effect of education in palliative and end of life care on the knowledge and attitude of nurses from selected hospitals, Kerala. The researcher used a convenient sampling technique to recruit the participants prior to the educational session. Out of 370 delegates, 230 were selected as sample who met the inclusion criteria. They were subjected to complete the tool with categories of demographic data, knowledge questionnaire and attitude scale. The analytical findings revealed that 76.9% subjects had poor knowledge, 22.6% with good knowledge and only 0.4% had excellent level of knowledge in palliative care before the educational session. The mean knowledge score of the sample markedly improved from 10.35 to 15.87 ($t_{(229)} = 21.63, p < 0.05$) after the intervention. Statistically significant improvement was also evident in the attitude score after the session ($t_{(229)} = 6.09, p < 0.05$). Future research studies should emphasize more on the sustainability of knowledge and attitude of nurses and the implementation of palliative care practice in hospitals as well as community settings.

Keywords: palliative, end of life care, nursing



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Address for Correspondence:

Sr Lilly Joseph MSc (N), PhD

Nursing Scholar & Principal, Lourdes College of Nursing, Ernakulam, Kerala

E mail: principal@lourdescollegeofnursing.in

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INTRODUCTION

In this study, the researcher assessed effect of education in palliative and end of life care on the knowledge and attitude of nurses using a pre experimental pretest- post test design.

Background and Need for the study

Patients with life limiting illnesses can be found in almost all areas of health care. Nurses who work across the health system can find themselves in clinical situations where palliative care knowledge is needed even if they are not specialist nurses, this kind of palliative approach to nursing care is delivered everywhere that patients can be found, such as in community care, oncology units, surgical units and emergency departments. Palliative care is important to relieve physical, psychological, social, emotional and spiritual suffering while improving the quality of life for chronically ill children as well as adults and their families.

Several researchers have evaluated the knowledge and attitude of nurses regarding palliative care and the essentiality of an educational session on caring of chronically ill patients. Venkitesan Prem³(2015)_pointed out that being knowledgeable about palliative care assessment and management can help nurses and other health care providers overcome many of the barriers to successful pain control and palliative care. He also compared the demographic variables such as age, gender, work settings and present work experience which was not significantly associated.

A descriptive cross sectional study conducted by Ahmad Ayed² (2015) reported that half of the nurses had poor knowledge level of palliative care and most respondents' attitude level towards palliative care were moderate. He explains that it is necessary to first establish nurses' baseline knowledge and beliefs so that relevant educational programs can be initiated as it needs to become an

integral part of all nursing school curricula as well as continuing nursing and medical education program offerings.

Samya El- Nagar¹ (2013) evaluated the impact of palliative care education on nurses' knowledge, attitude and experience regarding care of chronically ill children and was concluded that majority of studied nurses were bachelor degree and most of them were not caring for dying children in the past year and there were significant difference between pre and post test knowledge and attitude in giving care to a dying patient. The study recommended to work within systems to develop programs to link hospital's end- of- life programs with the community hospice home agencies, so that children and their families can return home and receive excellent care.

Although many researchers developed an interest in giving attention towards palliative care education to the nurses, it should also be incorporated in the national curriculum of nurse education as it can enhance the competency and confidence of novice nurses.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to assess the effect of education in palliative and end of life care on the knowledge and attitude of nurses. Nurses have a unique opportunity not only to help the patient and their family to prepare for the time of death, but also assist with actual journey of how they get to that final moment. Education has a key role in addressing the deficiencies of nurses in palliative care and inculcating the skills and confidence that they need in caring chronically ill patients. Assessing the knowledge and attitude of nurses regarding palliative and end of life care and provision of education has inevitable role in empowering nurses.

Objectives

1. To assess the knowledge and attitude of nurses in palliative and end of life care
2. To evaluate the effect of education in palliative care and end of life care among nurses
3. To determine the association between knowledge and selected demographic variables

METHODOLOGY

Instrument: The tool had three sections namely demographic information, assessment of the nurses' knowledge levels and assessment of the nurses' attitude of palliative care. The demographic information included baseline data of the sample. The second section with knowledge assessment included 20 items with a score range of poor knowledge 0- 10, good knowledge 11-17 and

excellent knowledge 18-25. The attitude assessment had 10 items rated at 5 points; 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= uncertain, 4= disagree and 5= strongly disagree.

Procedure

The study was done as a pre experimental pretest post test design on nurses from selected hospitals in Kerala. The aim was to assess the effect of education on knowledge and attitude of nurses in palliative and end of life care. A convenient sampling technique was used to recruit the participants. The participants were nurses from different hospitals in Kerala.

Sl. No.	Demographic variables	f	%	
1	Age	20-30 yrs	201	87.4%
		31-41 yrs	17	7.39%
		41-50 yrs	7	3.04%
		>50 yrs	5	1.73%
2	Gender	Male	10	4.34%
		Female	220	95.6%
3	Nursing Qualification	Diploma	128	55.7%
		Bachelor	92	40%
		Master	10	4.3%
4	Department of work	General ward	92	40%
		Intensive care Unit	52	22.6%
		Emergency department	22	9.5%
		Others	64	27.8%
5	Working experience	<5 yrs	184	80%
		5- 10 yrs	28	12.1%
		11- 15 yrs	8	3.47%
		>15 yrs	10	4.3%
6	Experience in PC	Yes	54	23.4%
		No	176	76.5%
7	Pursuing palliative care course	Yes	13	5.6%
		No	217	94.3%

Table 1: Demographic Data of Nurses (N=230)

A total of 370 nurses attended the educational session from which 230 sample who met the inclusion criteria were selected for the study.

Data were gathered before the educational session. Ethical approval was obtained from concerned authority. Nurses were informed about the purpose and procedure of the study and were ensured that participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. The educational session included plenary sessions, interactive presentations, videos, role plays, case study approaches, critical incident analysis, live demonstrations and group exercises on palliative care. At the end of the session, post test questionnaires were distributed among the sample and the data were collected for descriptive and inferential analysis.

RESULT

The statistical analysis was performed using the SPSS software version. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean). Paired ‘t’ test was used to find the effect of the education on knowledge and attitude of nurses regarding palliative and end of life care. The chi-square test was used to check for associations. In this present study the demographic variables such as age, gender, nursing qualification, department of work, working experience, professional experience with palliative care or hospice and whether they have taken any palliative care elective course were considered for the analysis of the study.

A response rate of 62.16% (n=230 out of 370) was achieved. Most of the study subjects were in the age group of 20-30 years (87.4%). Out of 230 sample, 4.34% was male and the remaining were females (95.6%). 55.7% had qualification of diploma nursing whereas 40% and 4.3% had bachelor and master degree respectively. With respect to work experience of the sample, (40%) works in general wards, 22.6% in intensive care units and 9.5% in emergency department. Although 80% of sample had work experience more than 5 years, 76.5% had no experience in palliative care. Majority of the sample, 94.3% had not taken palliative care course before whereas 5.6% had taken the course earlier.

As revealed in the figure 1, out of 230 sample, majority 177 (76.9%) had poor knowledge before the educational program whereas the knowledge score had increased to 164 (71.3%) in the category of good knowledge after the session. Figure 2 markedly reveals that the attitude of nurses before the session majorly included in the poor category 155 (67.3%) and has a significant increase towards the good attitude 178 (77.3%) when analysed after the post test.

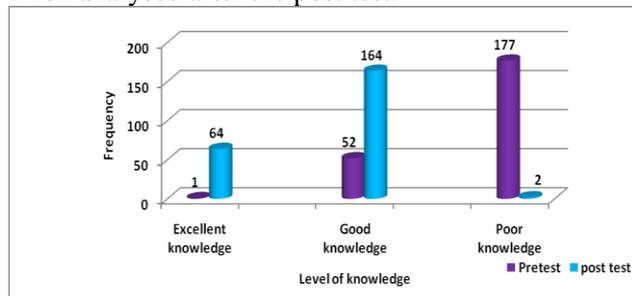


Figure 1: Frequency distribution of knowledge of nurses regarding palliative and end of life care before and after the educational session

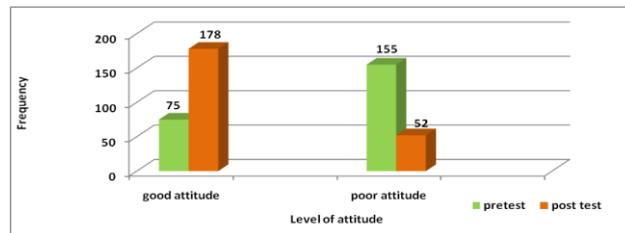


Figure 2: Frequency distribution of attitude of nurses regarding palliative and end of life care before and after the educational session

Knowledge score	Before intervention	After intervention	‘t’ value	df
	Mean score	Mean score		
	10.37	15.87	21.63*	229

Table 2: Mean, standard deviation and ‘t’ value of knowledge among nurses before and after intervention

*significant at p<0.05, SD:3.8, Table value 1.98

Table 2 shows the significance of the intervention on knowledge of nurses as the calculated table value (21.63) is higher than the ‘t’ value at 0.05 level of significance.

Attitude score	Before intervention	After intervention	‘t’ value	df
	Mean score	Mean score		
	35.46	42.13		

Table 3: Mean, standard deviation and ‘t’ value of attitude among nurses before and after intervention

*significant at p<0.05, SD:6.3, Table value 1.98

Table 3 reveals that there is significant increase in the level of attitude as the calculated table value (6.09) is greater than the ‘t’ value at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the educational session on palliative and end of life care has its marked effect on the attitude of nurses.

Demographic variable	‘t’ value	df	χ ² value
Age	12.59	6	0.34 _{ns}
Gender	5.99	2	0.44 _{ns}
Nursing qualification	9.49	4	0.58 _{ns}
Department of work	12.59	6	0.99 _{ns}
Working experience	12.59	6	1.20 _{ns}
Experience in PC	5.99	2	0.99 _{ns}
Pursuing Palliative Care course	5.99	2	0.81 _{ns}

Table 4: Analysis of the association of knowledge of nurses regarding palliative and end of life care with selected demographic variables

p = 0.05 level of significance; ns = non significant
Table 4 which illustrate the association of specific demographic variables on the knowledge of nurses regarding the palliative and end of life care shows that none of the demographic variables had association with the knowledge level of nurses as the calculated chi-square values were less than the table value.

DISCUSSION

The goal of the study was to assess the effect of education on palliative and end of life care on the knowledge and attitude of nurses and to find the association of knowledge of nurses with demographic variables. The researcher has analyzed the level of knowledge and attitude before and after the education on palliative and end of life care and the result showed a marked increase in the level of knowledge and attitude. But knowledge level of nurses had no association with any demographic variables. The results of the study helps to find out the need of educational sessions which can change the behaviour, attitude as well as knowledge of nurses in the clinical practice and can increase their comfort and confidence in caring patients who need palliative or end of life care.

The present study results are consistent with a study conducted by Hiwot kassa (2014)⁴ with an objective to evaluate the impact of palliative care education on nurses' knowledge, attitude and experience regarding care of chronically ill children. The results showed that high level of knowledge had increased from 30% to 60% and the good attitude also had a marked increase from 10% to 70% after the education.

CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that the nurses have prominent role in end of life care. Hence it is important to assess the knowledge and attitude of nurses to help them to handle the situation. It is also essential that the nurses should be assisted to perform their duties based on the knowledge they grasp in various trainings, workshops, formal or informal education which has significant effect in inculcating higher level of knowledge and attitude regarding palliative and end of life care.

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