

Pediatric Nurses' Knowledge, Beliefs, Practices and Perceived Barriers for Palliative Care

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BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

- Thousands of children die each year and many more live with chronic, life-limiting illnesses¹.
- Pediatric palliative care (PPC) focuses on symptom management and improved quality of life².
- Many barriers contribute to late referrals to palliative care or a complete lack of referrals³.
- Research indicates palliative care is most effective and better received when initiated at time of diagnosis⁴.

Purpose:

To describe pediatric nurses knowledge, beliefs and practices regarding PPC as well as identification of perceived barriers to the implementation of PPC across units at an academic children's hospital.



METHODS

Setting and Participants

- A 279-bed freestanding children's hospital
- Inclusion criteria:
 - All registered nurses (RNs), including case managers and nurse practitioners
 - Inpatient as well as ambulatory clinics
- Descriptive, cross-sectional web-based survey distributed to 973 RNs via email link to Survey Monkey©
- Participant demographic information including: spirituality, religious affiliation, educational background, years of nursing experience, and areas of specialty were collected and are available upon request.

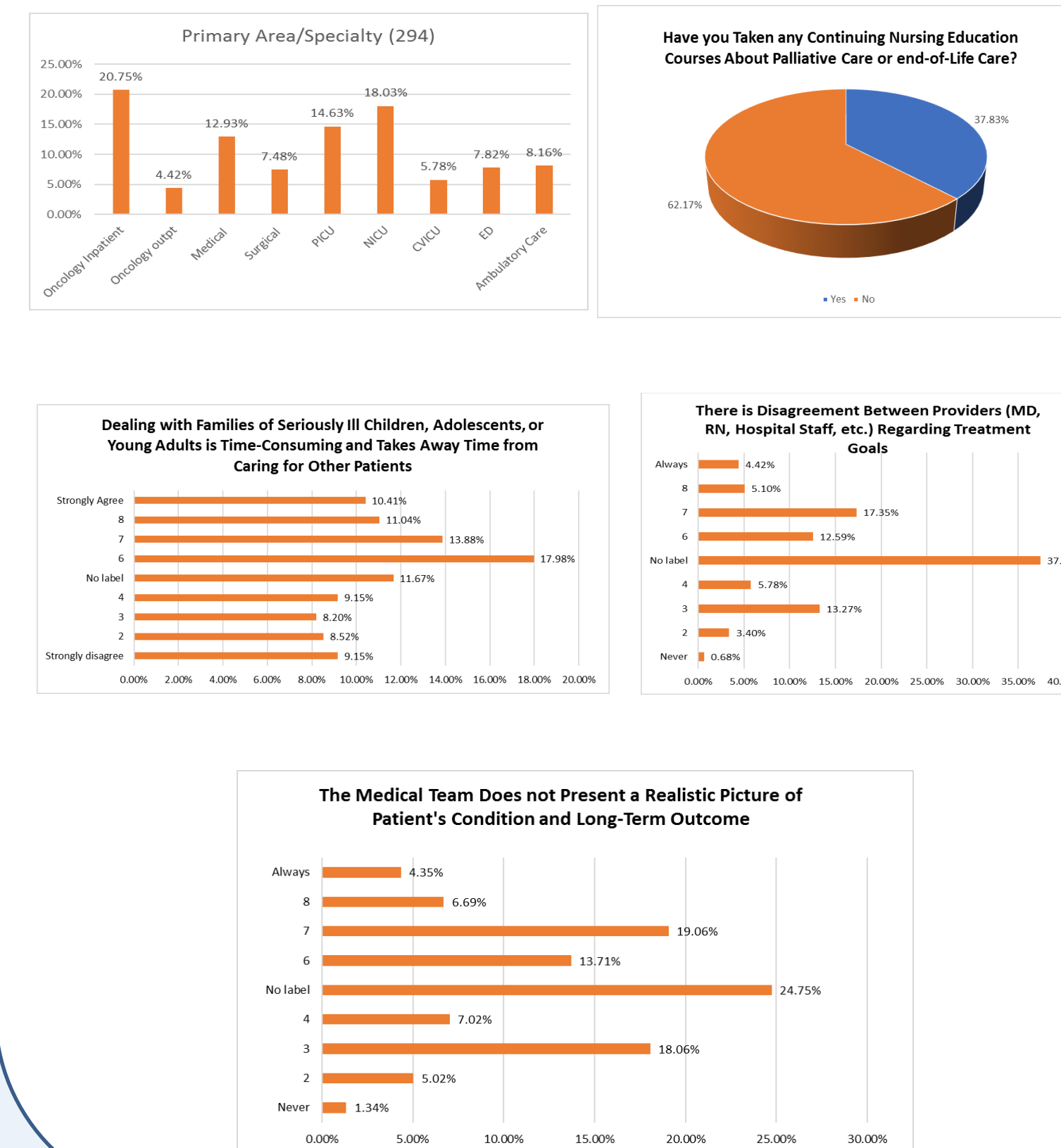
Instrument

The *Palliative Care Survey for Pediatric Nurses* (PCS4PRN)

- 89 question survey + demographics
 - Likert-scale responses
- Developed based on previous studies and clinical experience
- Content validity established through comparisons with palliative care literature and input from nationally recognized experts

RESULTS

- 331 registered nurses, from all units, completed the PCS4PRN survey, with the majority of those participants (86.2%) being direct patient care providers.
- Experience levels of participants varied with the majority of those responding (26.07%) having 10-20 years of experience in the nursing profession.
- Results indicated the existence of numerous barriers which may contribute to the late referral or complete lack of referral to palliative care.



CONCLUSION/IMPLICATIONS

Identified Barriers

- Disagreement among medical team regarding goals
- Unrealistic picture of patient's condition and long-term outcome
- Not enough experienced palliative care nurses
- Nurses perceive they require more knowledge to provide PPC
- Lack of nursing continuing education

Implications for Future Research

Additional analysis and research are indicated based on the results of this research study

- Further data analysis needed (e.g. by unit, by years of experience)
- Assessment of PPC learning opportunities
- Need for studies that focus on medical team and barriers
- Further research on triggers for PPC

Implications for CHOC Children's Hospital

- Continuing PPC education for nurses
 - Palliative care nursing workgroups to address communication and knowledge barriers
 - Further research on triggers for PPC
- References are available upon request.

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