

Making the Most of Limited Time: A Multimodality Approach Integrating a Targeted Computer-Based Curriculum During a Short Palliative Care Rotation

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Topic to be Presented

Education initiative

Introduction

In an era of a growing cohort of senior citizens and medical advances, there is a critical need to prepare physicians to care for patients with serious and life-limiting illnesses. The Liaison Committee on Medical Education mandates that “end-of-life care” be included in medical school curricula, however, few medical schools dedicate time toward the attainment of palliative care knowledge and skills. Palliative care principles are often weaved into existing curricular structures without a coherent approach. Additionally, palliative care education during residency and fellowship training is inconsistent and sometimes non-existent. This has led to gaps in competencies for the newest generation of physicians charged with caring for an unprecedented number of patients living with complex illnesses. A curriculum that uses an interdisciplinary approach and combines diverse educational methods can be effective at enhancing trainees’ skills and preparedness in palliative care competencies.

Methods and Materials

We developed a structured palliative care curriculum that can be utilized by medical students, residents, fellows and other learners regardless of time constraints.

The curriculum uses a multimodality approach:

- learner assessment tools (pretest and posttest as well as pre and post rotation surveys)
- reference materials
- Small group lectures
- Short web-based modules
- Experiential learning

Learners’ feedback and assessment results are used to demonstrate the impact and feasibility of this approach.

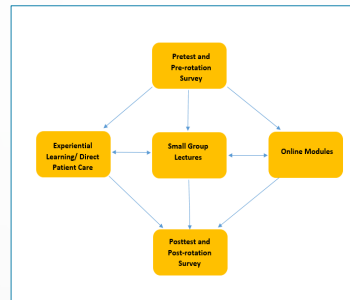


Figure 1. Curriculum Structure.

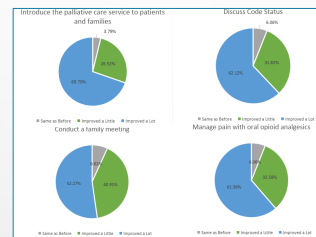


Figure 2. Sample of survey responses from all learners showing increased level of comfort across all palliative care competencies.

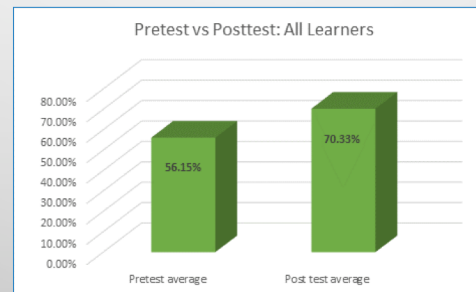


Figure 3. Pretest versus Posttest scores for all learners.

Test Scores By Rotation Length

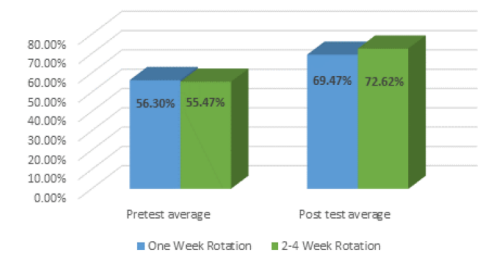


Figure 4. Comparison of Pretest versus Posttest scores based on length of rotation.

Results

- For all learners, posttest results showed an improvement of 21% compared to pre-test results.
- Learners with a longer rotation (2-4 weeks) had a greater improvement in test scores compared to those with a shorter rotation (24% increase compared to 19% increase).
- Self-assessment survey results show marked increase in the level of learner comfort in palliative care related competencies across the board.

Discussion

Literature has shown the need for implementation of palliative care and end of life care education at all stages of medical training. Identifying existing resources that can be incorporated into palliative care education is crucial to developing a comprehensive targeted palliative care curriculum.

Conclusion

The curriculum described in this abstract has shown to be effective and can be applied in different teaching settings, ranging from a large academic center to an outpatient clinic, even when limited time is a factor.

Contact

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References

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