

Marianne Schallmo

Abstract

International clinical practice guidelines recommend health care providers communicate palliative care options with patients. Several studies found nurses lacked basic palliative care knowledge to care for heart failure patients needing palliative care.

To bridge the health care provider knowledge gap, this quality improvement project aims to expand the cardiac nurses' repertoire to include comprehensive palliative care to the patient with heart failure.

The project was a pretest, posttest, and follow up posttest comparison. Nurses completed surveys measuring palliative care knowledge, attitude towards caring for the dying, and confidence in preparedness to care for the dying. The educational intervention consisted of web-based voice-over power points and face-to-face small groups.

Forty-one percent of cardiac nurses completed the program. Baseline results found although nurses lacked palliative care knowledge, they had a favorable attitude toward caring for the dying. After attending an educational program, there was a statistically significant increase in their knowledge, attitude toward care of the dying, and confidence to deliver palliative care.

Future research should determine best teaching methods. Knowledge alone will not change bedside practice. To ensure nurses engage in palliative care discussions, future studies should focus on measuring the success of transferring palliative care education to the bedside.