

Abstract

Background and Purpose: Most nurses report feeling unprepared to care for patients with palliative or end-of-life care needs citing lack of knowledge, confidence in care and negative attitudes toward care. The purpose of this project is to improve knowledge, attitudes, and confidence in caring for patients who require hospice or palliative care within long-term care.

Methods: A pre-posttest design was used to evaluate the impact of an educational intervention on knowledge, confidence, and attitudes. Conducted in a Maryland 125-bed long-term care facility, this project includes residents who elect to receive or are eligible for palliative or hospice care as well as the licensed nurses working in the facility. To assess knowledge, attitudes, and confidence pre-intervention, the Palliative Care Quiz for Nursing was submitted to the nurses before the educational intervention, immediately after the course, and again one-month post-intervention. Education was implemented in a four-part course series hosted on google sites, with asynchronous content presented to the nurses. Educational content was adapted from the End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium and Center to Advance Palliative Care coursework.

Results: The mean score of the pre-assessment questions (11.83) compared to the post-intervention scores (17.96) reveals a significant increase in knowledge post-survey vs. pre-survey, $p < .001$. Additionally, there was a statistically significant difference in the proportion of respondents who reported confidence and positive attitudes about palliative and end-of-life care pre- (57.1% confident) vs. post-survey (100% confident), $p < .001$.

Conclusions: The use of an educational intervention increased nursing knowledge, improved attitudes and increased confidence in care for nurses working in a long-term care facility.

Implications: Education in hospice and palliative care is limited in pre-licensure programs. Long-term care facilities should provide their employees with additional continuing education to enhance their knowledge and skills as it relates to caring for palliative and end-of-life or hospice patients.

Keywords: Long-Term Care, Hospice and Palliative Care, End-of-Life Care, Nursing Home