

## Evaluation of palliative care skills following an educational intervention

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### Abstract

#### Background

Education plays a central role in developing palliative care (PC) skills. Therefore it should be taken as a key factor to improve PC practice. Purpose of this study was to implement and evaluate the distance learning module on cancer PC to improve practices of nurses.

#### Method

The study design was a quasi-experimental design. National Institute of Cancer Maharagama and Oncology Unit in Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya, Sri Lanka were the study settings. Study was conducted between 2012–2014. DVD on cancer palliative care was developed and educational intervention on cancer PC was implemented using the DVD educational material over an eight-week period for the intervention group. Number of participants in the intervention group and control group were 38 and 37 respectively. Skills evaluation was conducted with Medical Officers (n=07) using validated interviewer guide and check list was used to evaluate with randomly selected ward sisters (n=12) four weeks following the intervention. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethical Review Committee of the Faculty of Medical Sciences.

#### Results

Key themes identified from the in-depth interviews with Medical Officers (MOs) were *address grievances well, assess pain without a tool, manage pain, communication and quality of care*. It was observed by ward sisters that PC skills performance of the intervention group ( $\bar{X}=78.63\pm 10.36$ ) was greater than that of control group ( $\bar{X}=32.28\pm 9.38$ ) at the 12th week follow-up and it was found that a significant difference of all the sub-variables between control and intervention group.

## **Conclusion**

Medical Officers highlighted that nurses had been showed an improvement of the quality of care after trained. However they assess physical pain without pain assessment tool. The results of post intervention assessment by the ward sisters of intervention and control groups revealed that there was a significant improvement of PC skills in trained nurses.

## **Key words**

Palliative care, grievances, communication