

PSYCHOSOCIAL SKILLS IN PALLIATIVE CARE

- Evaluating the Impact of Education



Care
Compassion
Understanding

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Introduction

Local and national guidelines within the UK identify psychosocial care as an area of high priority (NICE, 2004; NCPCS, 2007). Studies have reported that health care professionals have low confidence in this aspect of patient care (Griffiths et al, 2007). This can be related to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the key features of psychosocial care. Education is essential in meeting the needs of health professionals (Wowchuk et al, 2007) especially in respect of improving psychosocial care at the end of life.



Aim

This study aimed to evaluate the impact of a three-day psychosocial care education programme, specifically whether attendance on the programme:

- Increased knowledge and understanding of the key principles of psychosocial care
- Increased confidence in providing psychosocial care



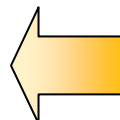
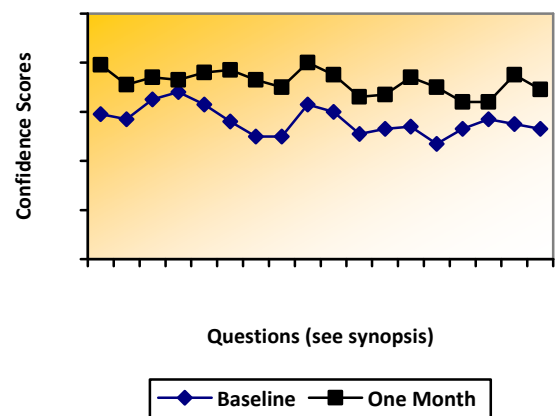
Methods

The study adopted a between-methods triangulation approach involving the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data:

- Nine participants completed the programme
- A confidence questionnaire was administered before and one month after the programme
- A self-reported knowledge questionnaire was administered before and after each study day
- Participants conducted an audio-taped patient interview between days two and three, followed by a second observed interview after the programme
- A focus group was convened six months after completion of the programme



Mean Confidence Scores at Baseline and One Month post intervention



Key Findings

- All participants reported an increased understanding of the key issues of psychosocial care and application to their practice.
- Confidence questionnaires showed an increase in scores for all participants, although these must be viewed with caution due to the small sample size.
- The audio-taping and observation of a participant/patient interaction was seen as valuable by participants to enable them to critique their own working practice.
- Observations enabled the evaluation of patterns of relationship between self-reported confidence and knowledge of health professionals and their working practice.
- Participants reported a change in their practice in response to an increased understanding and confidence including more frequent and open discussions with patients regarding psychosocial issues.

References

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