



# Exploring Palliative Care Team Communication: An Interprofessional Simulation Study

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## Background

Providing end of life (EOL) care is a vital skill for every member of a healthcare team and required careful team communication

Many new graduates feel underprepared to provide EOL care and communicate in teams

Education on EOL care needed so all patients receive acceptable care

## Purpose

Determine how an interprofessional simulation fosters communication between healthcare student teams

## Methods

Simulations conducted over three semesters (Fall 2017- Fall 2018)

Each simulation video recorded

Two trained research assistants viewed the videos independently

Team communication assessed via **Gap Kalamazoo Communication Skills Assessment Form**

Evaluated 9 domains of team communication (poor to excellent)

Evaluations discussed and discrepancies resolved

## Simulation Design

Participants: 7-8 Nursing students, 1-2 Social Work students, & 1-2 Medical residents or students

Family members portrayed by actors; Patient portrayed by manikin

All students participated in a pre-briefing and a debriefing

Small groups acted in phases while others watched via live stream

Team members assigned tasks within professional scopes of practice

Simulation duration: 1-1.5 hours (varied by semester)



## Results

Communication scores reflected fair to good communication ( $M=28.81$ ,  $SD=5.55$ )

Top domains: *Shares Information, Communicating Accurate Information & Builds a Relationship*

Lowest domains: *Demonstrates Empathy, Provides Closure, Builds a Relationship*

Teams varied in demonstrating empathy (due to actor performances or simulation length)

Prior experience with simulation influenced engagement

## Conclusions

The simulation provided a means of teaching students about communication at EOL

Positively impacted communication

Highlights a need for healthcare education to focus on teaching appropriate empathy and provide closure in EOL situations

### Phase One

- Communication with Family
- Treatment Decision
- Interprofessional Communication

### Phase Two

- Patient Assessment
- Interprofessional Communication

### Phase Three

- Communication with Family
- End of Life Care

