A Feasibility Study in Nurse Compassion Cultivation Training

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Purpose/Objective:
The purpose of this pilot study was to determine the feasibility of a training program for oncology nurses. And, explore its effect on burn out, perceived stress, and coping skills after the training program.

Background/Significance:
Counseling a patient through treatment has been identified as one of the most important and rewarding aspects of oncology nursing. However, oncology nurses work in a high-stress environment which is fast-paced, detail oriented, and emotionally charged. Research has shown that oncology nurses frequently suffer from burn-out and compassion fatigue, more so than other nurse specialties, with estimates as high as 70%. This stress takes its toll physically on nurses, and also been associated with higher risk for medical errors. Previous interventions for oncology nurses, specifically communication training and stress management programs, have not demonstrated lasting benefit for stress and burn. Programs that provided extensive psychological training have shown the greatest impact on decreasing stress and burn out. However, few nurses have the time and resources to complete such trainings. Practices based on meditation, such as mindfulness and compassion, can help cultivate attention, awareness, and emotion regulation. This study proposed to deliver and test a novel educational intervention that focuses on contemplation and compassion.

Methodology/Data Analysis:
A quantitative cross-sectional descriptive design was used to explore: the feasibility of a training program for oncology nurses. And, to explore changes in burnout, perceived stress, and coping skills after the training program. The study involved an eight weeks Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) course with assessments conducted pre-, mid-, and post-

Descriptive statistics were used to evaluate the distribution of demographic variables. Feasibility was measured based on attrition rate. Assessments: Perceived Stress; Self-Efficacy; Burnout; Mindfulness; and Distress Tolerance were analyzed using within-subjects ANOVA to compare data across the three time points.

Finding/Implications:
The intervention was feasible with an attrition rate of 11.76%. Of the 15 participants who attended sessions, there was a high attendance rate (82.5%) and all participants’ made-up missed sessions by examining video recordings. The intervention resulted in significantly reduced perceived stress ($p=.004$), reduced emotional exhaustion ($p=.021$), improved energy ($p=.014$), improved social self-efficacy ($p=.028$), and increased mindfulness awareness and acceptance ($p=.028$). In addition, participants reported less cognitive failures ($p=.013$).

Discussion:
Study findings indicate that a compassion-training program based in mindfulness practice may be effective for reducing stress, burnout, and improving coping skills in oncology nurses. Future studies should examine intervention efficacy in a larger sample and identify whether objective measures of job performance, nurses’ quality of life and patient outcomes are influenced.

Title:
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Keywords:
Compassion Cultivation, Compassion Fatigue and Burnout and Nursing

References:


Abstract Summary:
The development of efficient, low-cost programs to increase nurse coping skills and to reduce stress and compassion fatigue may be a key priority for retaining experienced oncology nurses.

Content Outline:
Purpose/Objectives:

Background/Significance:

Methodology/Data Analysis:

Findings/Implications:

Discussion

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