Virtual Patient & Simulation: Strategies to Teach End-of-Life Care
by Leona Konieczny, DNP, MPH, RN-BC, CNE
Central Connecticut State University

Objectives
- Identify the need for teaching end-of-life care.
- Describe the use of technology to engage nursing students in learning how to care for patients with progressive illness and support families.
- Discuss the concept of case palliative vs. care.
- Apply different strategies to expand on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes involved in end-of-life care.
- Estimate how learning in the virtual world can be applied to the actual clinical setting.
- Define and understand how virtual learning and simulation teach technical skills, social skills, communication skills, decision making appropriately, and clinical reasoning.

Aging Population Data
- In 2011, 44.4 million in US (13.3%) and by 2030, anticipated increase to 72.1 million (21%) (AHA).
- Largest growth is 65+ years and between 1980-2010, 66% increase in communities (Tandy & Jain, 2014).
- 3.6 million persons received hospice care (NHPCO, 2013).

Virtual Patient
- Digital experience
  - Students have multiple opportunities to complete assignment prior to the due date.
  - 78 year old female of Korean Heritage
  - Simulated electronic health record
  - Reinforcement of health history & physical assessment skills

Virtual Activities
- Document vital signs, subjective & objective data.
- Reinforce a culture of safety with interventions such as direct identification and barcoding.
- Perform virtual exam.
- SBAR report.
- Enter reflective journal on performance.
- Document the clinical reasoning used during the simulation.

Literature Review
- Education about end-of-life reduced death anxiety in nursing students if it allowed for reflection of attitudes & beliefs over time (Moore, 2005).
- Experience in providing end-of-life care increases skill, knowledge, & empathy (Kevaua, et al., 2006).
- Five themes—importance of values & beliefs, personal & professional experiences, good vs. bad death, ethics & legislation, education & knowledge (Medina, et al., 2014).

Use of Learning Management System
- Unfold case study in preparation for next simulation.
- Client’s health status deteriorates from treatable manageable condition to end-of-life situation.
- Discussion board postings.

References
- Available online: Aging in Long-Term Care.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.
- Available online: Dying, Grieving.

Simulation in Lab & Course Integration
- Have patients tandem with programmable tablet.
- Run rounds in lab setting.
- Content delivery in the scenario—demonstration of continuous care & specific family support, cultural and religious considerations in clinical setting.
- Debriefing.
- Digital experience is completed before experience in clinical setting in long term care.
- After simulation in lab, reflection of paper learning on one aspect of end-of-life care such as comfort plan while, date, non-pharmacological support, or spiritual considerations. Include of current evidence to support decision making.