

BACKGROUND

What Is Palliative Care?

- Interdisciplinary patient- and family-centered care optimizing quality of life by anticipating, preventing, and alleviating suffering across the continuum of a severe illness
- Improves patient and family coping and management of advanced disease especially symptoms and psychological implications

Purpose

- Review literature to discuss from a global perspective evidence supporting the nurse's role in palliative care as a strategy to address the needs of patients and their families

METHODS

- Searched PubMed, CINAHL, & EBSCO electronic databases for relevant articles reporting the nurse's role in palliative care
- Identified and reviewed 37 articles that fit search criteria
- Extracted the common elements of palliative care in nursing and successful interventions and trainings

RESULTS

Main Roles Of Nurses' In Palliative Care

- Health care leaders and essential members of healthcare team
- Patient and family advocates
- Expert communicators with patients, families, & other members of the health care system
- Symptom management and mitigating symptom burden

Nurses & Palliative Care

- Nurses often recognize changes in patients' health status, and these are the junctures during which palliative care may be introduced
- Nurse-led interventions significantly improve patient quality of life & end of life care outcomes (COMFORT, ELNEC)
- Nurse's role as a generalist in palliative care has been growing but isn't fully defined
- Nurses are skilled in primary aspects of palliative care such as symptom management, communication, and patient advocacy

Gaps In Literature

- Few studies systematically test the results of nurse led palliative care
- Unclear what types of resources at the institutional and administrative level are available for nurses to be supported when providing palliative care

RECOMMENDATIONS

Nurses in all settings & roles should be confident & empowered to engage in palliative care
Recommendations To Better Educate & Support Nurses To Provide Palliative Care:

- Adapt currently established evidence-based palliative care training for practicing nurses: i.e. online training, live video conferencing, e-platforms
- Provide education and skill-building in communication, identifying goals of care, end-of-life decision making, and symptom management through brief, evidence-based palliative care training programs such as the End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) or the COMFORT communication curriculum

Nursing Education Palliative Care Competencies

- Integrate palliative care competencies into undergraduate and graduate nursing curricula regardless of area of specialization
- Expand palliative care into all curricula to ensure a steady nurse workforce that can address palliative care needs across clinical settings

Administrative Support For Nurses Providing Palliative Care

- Training in coping strategies that can diffuse emotional stress
- Establishing support groups or opportunities for nurses within organizations to debrief about their experience providing palliative care

Ethics In Palliative Care

- Create systems for ongoing dialogue about ethical concerns and continuing education in ethics related to palliative care
- Nurses at all levels of an organization need to work together to empower clinical nurses to consider and reflect on improving their ethical practice

PALLIATIVE CARE TERM DEFINITIONS

8 Domains Of Palliative Care:

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|----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Structure and process of care | 3. Spiritual, religious, and existential aspects of care | 5. Social aspects of care | 7. Psychological and psychiatric aspects |
| 2. Physical aspects of care | 4. Cultural aspects of care | 6. Ethical and legal aspects of care | 8. Care of the patient at the end of life |

Advance care planning: A dynamic process where patients anticipate and discuss treatment options in preparation for death, serious illness, and/or potential incapacity; can result in the completion of advance directives and POLST forms

Advance directive: A legal document (i.e., living will or durable power of attorney) providing details on the patient's future healthcare wishes and goals of care

Living Will: Document detailing an individual's healthcare preferences under specific situations, can include information on refusing, limiting, or withholding / withdrawing life-sustaining treatment

Durable Power of Attorney: Document appointing a health care proxy to make healthcare decisions in the event of decision making incapacity

Health Care Proxy: Individual appointed by the patient to make healthcare decisions when the patient lacks decision making capacity

POLST Form Physicians Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) forms include actionable medical orders for seriously ill patients; meant to be easily modified and used to determine the appropriateness of life sustaining measures in a medical crisis; MOLST, MOST, and POST forms are similar to POLST forms

*These definitions are derived from the National Consensus Project for Quality Palliative Care and the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association.



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