

Teaching to Develop a View of Life and Death in Nursing Students

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Purpose

As Japanese society increasingly ages, in 2025 it is estimated that deaths will reach a yearly figure of 1,600,000. Against this background, the Japanese Ministry of Science and Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has established as goals for students graduating from college nursing programs that they should have the ability to relieve and reduce suffering at the end of life, respect, support and be able to offer advice to the dying on an individual basis. This paper clarifies an educational project seeking to develop a view of life and death and foster the ability to support and care for people at the end of their lives amongst nursing students, many of whom have been brought up in nuclear families with little chance to see death or end-of-life nursing at close hand.

Methods

Subjects

3rd year nursing majors who had completed basic nursing practicum and who were taking their first classes in palliative care.

Research period 2015.6.17 – 2015.8.31.

Methodology

Questionnaire about changes in view of life and death after a course of lessons in palliative care (one 90-minute class a week for six weeks).

The content of lessons

Introductory Cancer Nursing, Team-Approach Medicine
 Holistic Pain Relief : Physical pain, social pain and care
 Holistic Pain Relief : Mental pain and care
 Holistic Pain Relief: Spiritual pain and care
 Radiation Treatment, Chemotherapy
 Family Care, Nursing Care.

【 Teaching materials 】

Teaching materials took the form of a DVD about image of cancer patients, spiritual care, and life review of patients as seen by family members. There was a 10-minute discussion with fourth-year students concerning involvement with end-of-life patients.

【 The questionnaire 】

27 items and 7 factors with seven-point Likert scale: 1- 7 Does not apply.

1. Afterlife belief 2. Death anxiety 3. Death relief 4. Death avoidance
 5. Life purpose 6. Death concern 7. Supernatural belief

Analysis

A parametric statistical test for mean deviance was conducted and the significance level was set at 0.05.

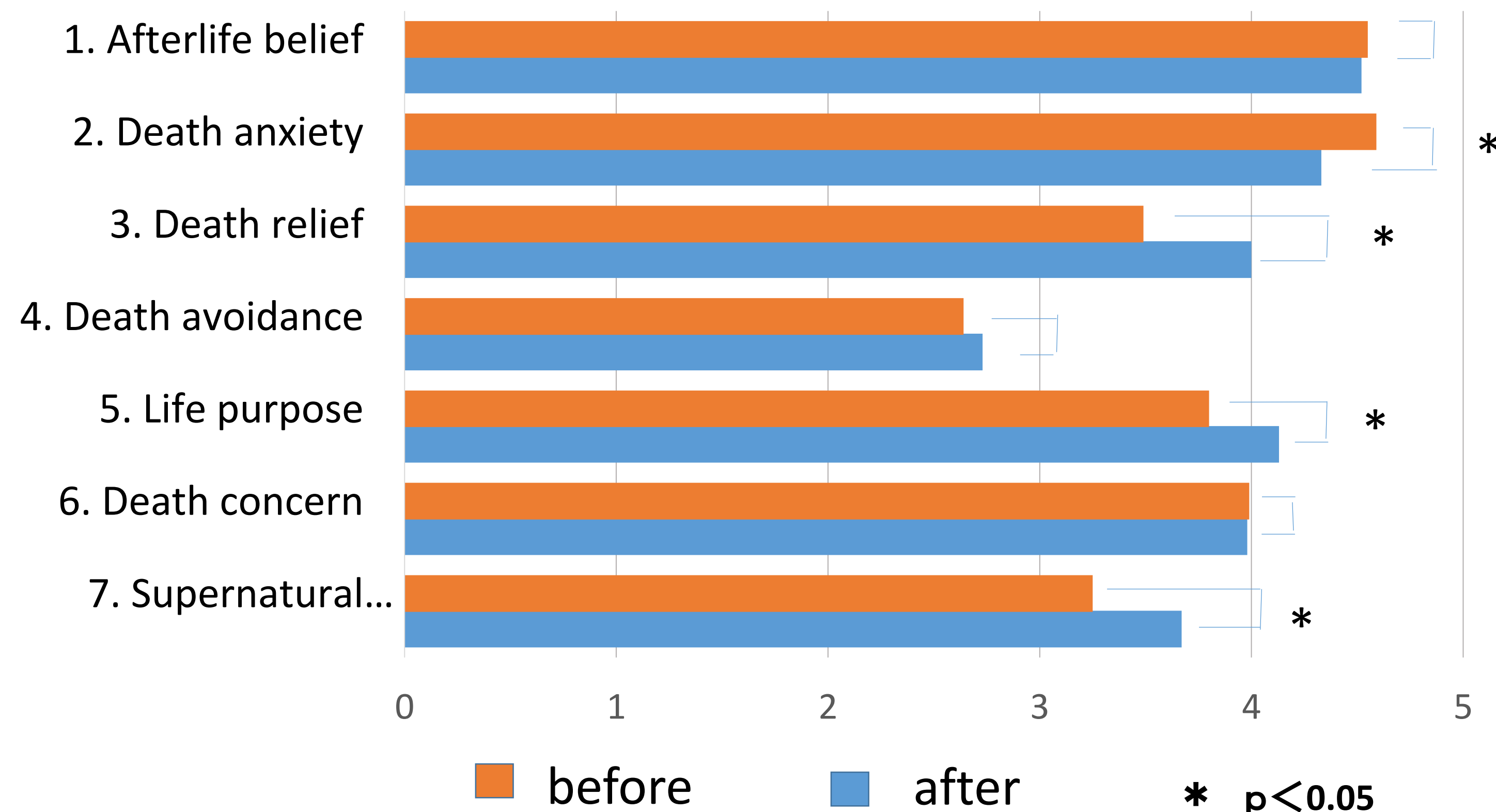
Ethical consideration

- I made following contracts with a target person by a document and word of mouth. What study entry agrees based on free will and can withdraw, in that case, the disadvantage not occurring either, securing of anonymity, publication in the society.
- I got the approval of the ethic examination committee of the Hyogo University.

Results

The number of subjects was 89 students before the classes and 95 after, and 89.7% of the participants were female. The average age was 20.9 (19-45). 90% of students had a bereavement experience.

Afterlife belief before and after a course



Statistical testing of difference before and after the classes had a t-value of 0.505 (p < 0.05).

The mean score before the classes in the measure of view of life and death was 3.6 and after it was 3.8. Amongst the items, the lowest mean score was for [escaping death].

Changes in view of life and death after the course

Positive Change	Negative Change
【3. Death relief】 「I regard death as the relief from the pressure of this life」 Other 3 items	【6. Death concern】 「I think well what am I with death? 」 Other 3 items
【7. Supernatural belief】 「People's span of life considers beforehand“ I am decided by it”」 Others 2 items	【1. Afterlife belief】 「I think that there are“ soul” and“ curse” in this world」 Other 3 items
【5. Life purpose】 「I have found out the mission and the purpose which were clearly made into life」 Other 3 items	【2. Death anxiety】 「Dying is dreadful」 Other 3 items
【4. Death avoidance】 「I avoid considering death」 Other 3 items	

Discussion

- These results indicate that the classes and the materials used in them were a factor in the students assimilating and deepening knowledge over time about life and death.
- Before the classes, they had vague attitudes and ways of thinking about death, but the combination of DVD presentation, simulations and discussions provided an opportunity to confront the reality of death, articulate their view concerning life and death, and develop the ability to offer nursing care at the end of life.
- However, comparing the mean value of 3.8 against a maximum of 7, and the value of 2.69 for [escaping death] suggests the need for further diligent efforts throughout clinical practicums up and until graduation.

Conclusion

The variety of teaching methods had an effect in developing students' views of life and death, but the results for [escaping death] show the need for continued efforts.