



## Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

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### **Educational Program for Nurses on End-of-life Care of Cancer Patients: A Literature Review**

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#### **Introduction**

Cancer has been the leading cause of death worldwide for more than two decades. Many patients with advanced cancer will develop numerous physical symptoms related to their diseases and they seek relief of suffering at the end stage of their lives. Nurses play a key role in providing end-of-life care by identifying symptoms and coordinating the management of distressful symptoms in terminally ill patients. However, nurses encounter many barriers in providing quality care at the end stage of life of cancer patients. The major barriers are lacking of sufficient knowledge and inadequate education training for nurses.

#### **Objectives**

To determine the effects and characteristics of educational program on end-of-life care for nurses.

#### **Methodology**

A systematic search of literature from 2002 to 2014 in five databases (i.e. MEDLINE, CINAHL, British Nursing Index, EMBASE and EBSCOhost) was done to identify English language articles with keywords such as “end-of-life care”, “cancer patients”, “educational program”, “educational intervention”, “nurse”, and “nursing care”.

#### **Result**

A total of five studies were included in the review. Positive results were consistently demonstrated in different studies, showing that participants had significant improvement in various aspects such as knowledge, confidence and competencies on end-of-life care after they completed the program. The duration of educational sessions ranged from 20 minutes to 60 minutes, and they were either presented in single session or multiple sessions. Besides, there were universal supports for the inclusion of teaching of end-of-life care in all undergraduate curricula. However, there were little consensus of which teaching methods were most effective; indicating that much of the research is yet to be carried out in end-of-life care education. This review identifies the effects and characteristics of educational program on end-of-life

care for nurses. As scanty evidence was found in Hong Kong to examine the effectiveness of educational program provided to nurses, this review provides directions in providing educational program for nurses in Hong Kong on end-of-life care of cancer patient.