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Progressive Development and Enhancement of End of Life Care in Surgical Wards in United Christian Hospital

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Introduction

Education on end of life (EOL) care to enhance nurses' knowledge and attitude are essential to high-quality service. A lack of trainings in surgical units, however, is a key barrier to its application.

Objectives

A steering committee in Department of Surgery, United Christian Hospital is established in 9/2014 to investigate attitude and training needs of surgical nurses and conduct a series of trainings.

Methodology

An EOL care campaign with three phases were launched. The first phase was to investigate surgical nurses' knowledge (22/12/2014-4/1/2015) and attitude (16/2-1/3/2015) towards EOL care. A knowledge test containing 13 multiple-choice questions from domains of EOL care concept, assessment, symptom management, grief and bereavement, ethics, and staff stress was formulated by the committee. Frommelt Attitude Towards Care of the Dying Scale (FATCOD) with full marks of 150 was adopted to assess nurses' attitude. The second phase was to organize trainings (21/8-25/9/2015) regarding to the findings of both surveys. The third phase (5/8-28/12/2015) was to design a nursing care checklist for DNACPR patients with advanced life-threatening illness.

Result

As stated in another report, nurses' FATCOD score ranged from 50 to 113 with $\bar{x}=99.91\pm 8.18$ ($n=96$, 100% response rate). Linear regression found that years of nursing experience explained 12.1% of the FATCOD variance. Nurses were facing anxiety and difficulties even though they possessed positive EOL attitude. Results of the knowledge test ($n=96$, 92.7% response rate) ranged from 3 to 13 with $\bar{x}=8.78\pm 2.14$. Nurses were most familiar with physical symptoms but less sensitive to ethical and psychological issues. A series of trainings was conducted according to the identified problems, i.e. training needs. Medical specialists, experienced nurses and medical social workers were invited to give seminars on topics of self-preparation,

ethical consideration, communication skills, diagnosis, medications and effective nursing care for imminently dying patients. Attendance rate were more than 90%. Very positive feedbacks were received. A nursing care checklist for DNACPR patients with advanced life-threatening illness was also established. It acts as a reference guide for caring patients with impending death. It was launched on 28/12/2015. Surgical nurses should be competent to prepare for death of patients. EOL care trainings can provide support to nurses in handling death issues, evoke their self-reflection and regain the passions to face the daily life challenges.