

The Increasing Self-Confidence of Caring for End-Stage Patients Through a 40-Hour-3-Learning-Module Palliative Care Curriculum for First-Year Medical Students

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Introduction

Taipei city hospital has held a new palliative care curriculum for the first-year medical students since 2015. We provide 6 hour basic knowledge of palliative care as an integral part of medical education and giving them the opportunity to learn how to communicate with patients and families as well. This curriculum was the first-course leading preclinical students into palliative medicine in Taiwan. This study investigated the differences of the self-confidence of the students before and after the class.

Method

Taipei City Hospital created a 40-hour student-centered service-learning course of palliative care for first-year medical students from National Taiwan University. The course introduced palliative care through three learning modules: in-class principles discussion, communication at a hospice ward, and caring for people with life-limiting illness in their houses. We conducted a prospective questionnaire-based cohort study with a pre-post design. First-year medical students in 2016(n=21) were asked for self-estimation concerning confidence of caring for end-stage patients (0-10 points), knowledge, and psychological aspects before and after the course.

Findings

The average scores of the self-confidence of the palliative care ability were 3.36 and 5.29 before and after the teaching course, respectively. The course has helped the students to increase 57.4% of self-confidence of caring for end-stage patients. The course has also given the students the ability to provide support for people with life-limiting illnesses rather than the medical treatment they have not learned yet. Eighty-six percent of students felt helpful for developing professional expertise, and ninety percent of students were interested in further learning in palliative medicine. All the preclinical students believe that understanding palliative care and home-based holistic care will be helpful in their clinical training and professionalism later on.

Conclusion

Our palliative care curriculum do increase the self-confidence in caring for end-stage patients for first-year medical students. The curriculum has become a formal Service-Learning course in National Taiwan University since 2016.

