

# Baccalaureate Nursing Students' Attitudes Toward End of Life Care: The Impact of Simulation-Based Learning

Kristin Meloche Sagedy PhD, MSN, RN, CEN  
Holy Family University

1

## Background

- Death is a natural transition of human existence
- Nurses may care for patients at the end of life
- Goals of baccalaureate nursing education
- End of Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC)  
(American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2018b)
- Nurses report being unprepared to provide end of life care
- Best practice in end of life care education for baccalaureate nursing students

2

## Purpose of the Study

Determine how effective simulation-based learning (SBL) activities are at improving nursing students' attitudes toward end of life care.

3

## Significance

- Direct relationship between students' attitude toward care and the quality of care provided  
(Lewis, Reid, McLernon, Ingham, & Traynor, 2016)
- Additional research into simulation-based learning (SBL) activities and end of life care
- Inclusion of SBL activities in end of life care baccalaureate nursing education
- End of life care education for practicing nurses

4

## Review of Literature

- End of life care and nursing education
- Simulation-based learning
- Frommelt's Attitude Toward Care of the Dying, Form B (FATCOD-B) (Frommelt, 2003)
- Gaps
  - Insufficient evidence to identify simulation-based learning (SBL) activities as effective for use in end of life nursing education
  - Paucity of research into low-fidelity SBL activities

5

## Methodological Design

- Quasi-experimental study
  - IV: Simulation-based learning activities
  - DV: Students' attitudes toward end of life care
- Setting and sample
  - Small, Catholic University in Northeast US
  - Inclusion/exclusion criteria
- Instrument
  - Frommelt's Attitude Toward Care of the Dying, Form B (FATCOD-B) (Frommelt, 2003)
  - Demographic questionnaire

6

# Data Collection and Filtering

Recruitment

Pretest  
FATCOD-B

Simulation-  
based  
learning

Posttest  
FATCOD-B

Data filtering  
and analysis

7

# Findings

- 13.3% male
- 73.3% between 20-25 years old
- Pretest
  - Mean (SD) 120.13 (8.324)
  - Range 105-137
- Posttest
  - Mean (SD) 120.77 (8.472)
  - Range 96-139

8

## Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed Rank Test

Null hypothesis	Z	p
Simulation-based learning activities have no statistically significant positive effect on junior-level baccalaureate nursing students' attitudes toward care of patients at the end of life.	232.5	.501

9

## Results

- High-fidelity SBL produced a significant increase in FATCOD-B scores in previous research (Dame & Hoebeke, 2016; Lewis et al., 2016; Lippe & Becker, 2015)
- Lack of statistically significant increase in FATCOD-B scores

10

## FATCOD-B Individual Item Scores

Item	Pretest Average	Posttest Average	Difference	Z	p
3. I would be uncomfortable talking about impending death with the dying person.	2.80	3.43	+.63	221.00	.037*
16. Families need emotional support to accept the behavior changes of the dying person.	4.80	4.37	-.43	0.00	.005*
25. Addiction to pain relieving medication should not be a concern when dealing with a dying person.	3.10	3.67	+.57	121.00	.032*
27. Dying persons should be given honest answers about their condition.	4.33	4.63	+.3	40.50	.021*
30. It is possible for nonfamily caregivers to help patients prepare for death.	3.90	4.33	+.43	108.00	.027*

11

## Interpretation of FATCOD-B Individual Item Scores

### Increase in Score

- #3 - *I would be uncomfortable talking about impending death with the dying person*
- #25 - *addiction to pain relieving medication should not be a concern when dealing with a dying person*
- #27 - *dying persons should be given honest answers about their condition*
- #30 - *it is possible for nonfamily caregivers to help patients prepare for death*

### Decrease in Score

- #16 - *families need emotional support to accept the behavior changes of the dying person*
- #9 - *it is difficult to form a close relationship with the dying person*

12

## Limitations

- Research design
- Sampling
- Sample size
- Voluntary participation
- Researcher not present for low-fidelity SBL activities

13

## Implications for the Discipline of Nursing

- Nursing
  - Attitude toward end of life care
  - Clinical significance
- Nursing Education
  - Preparation for end of life care in baccalaureate nursing education
  - SBL in end of life education

14

# Recommendations for Future Research

- Low-fidelity SBL
  - End of life care
  - Nursing care
- Longitudinal research
- Repeat
- Mixed methods

15

# References\*

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing . (2008). *The essentials of baccalaureate education for professional nursing practice*. Retrieved from <http://www.aacnursing.org/Portals/42/Publications/BaccEssentials08.pdf>
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2016). *CARES: Competencies and recommendations for educating undergraduate nursing students: Preparing nurses to care for the seriously ill and their families*. Retrieved from <http://www.aacnursing.org/Portals/42/ELNEC/PDF/New-Palliative-Care-Competencies.pdf>
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2018a). Baccalaureate education. Retrieved from <http://www.aacnursing.org/Nursing-Education-Programs/Baccalaureate-Education>
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2018b). End-of-Life-Care (ELNEC). Retrieved from <http://www.aacnursing.org/ELNEC>
- Dame, L., & Hoebeke, R. (2016). Effects of a simulation exercise on nursing students' end-of-life care attitudes. *Journal of Nursing Education, 55*(12), 701-705. doi:10.3928/01484834-20161114-07

\*Full list provided upon request

16



## References

- Frommelt, K. (2003). Attitudes toward care of the terminally ill: An educational intervention. *American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Care*, 20, 13-22. doi:10.1177%2F104990910302000108
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Lewis, C., Reid, J., McLernon, Z., Ingham, R., & Traynor, M. (2016). The impact of a simulated intervention on attitudes of undergraduate nursing and medical students towards end of life care provision. *BMC Palliative Care*, 15, 1-6. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/s12904-016-0143-2>
- Lippe, M. P., & Becker, H. (2015). Improving attitudes and perceived competence in caring for dying patients: An end-of-life simulation. *Nursing Education Perspectives (National League for Nursing)*, 36(6), 372-378. doi:10.5480/14-1540