BUILDING A CURRICULUM IN PALLIATIVE CARE EDUCATION IN FAMILY MEDICINE-BASED ON A NEEDS ASSESSMENT – THE RESIDENTS' POINT OF VIEW

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THE PROBLEM

- Despite the importance of palliative care (PC), medical education in this field has not yet been formally integrated globally into the residency training programs, including family medicine.
- Based on PC opinion leaders in the US, PC requires a combination of clinical knowledge, communication skills and the ability to relate to psychological aspects of terminal illness.[(1)]
- In this pilot, we assessed which of these areas should receive greater emphasis in our curriculum by asking the residents themselves to identify areas of importance in PC as they see them, and to assess their levels of self-efficacy in managing palliative events.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- Family medicine residents completed an 18-item questionnaire developed by Schaefer et al, that included 5 main PC domains; principles, communication skills, pain & symptoms management, psychosocial & spiritual aspects of care, and terminal care & bereavement.
- The residents rated the competencies by level of importance and by level of perceived self-efficacy.
- A Likert scale of 0-5 was used.

RESULTS

- Response rate was 87% (96/110).
- The majority rated all 18 medical competencies as important (4.6/5.0). *Figure 1*
- Pain & symptom management and communication domains were rated most important. *Figure 1*
- In all domains, levels of self-efficacy were rated lower than levels of importance.
- Ranks of importance and self-efficacy differed by year of residency. *Figures 2 and 3*
- No differences were found in the responses when stratified by age or gender.

TABLE 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Characteristics	Number-N=96,n(%)
Sex	
Male	40(42)
Female	53(55)
Missing	3(3)
Age – Mean (yrs)	33
Year of Residency	
1-2.4	51(53)
2.5-4	37(39)
missing	8(4)

FIGURE 1: RATES OF IMPORTANCE & PERCEIVED SELF-EFFICACY BY DOMAINS

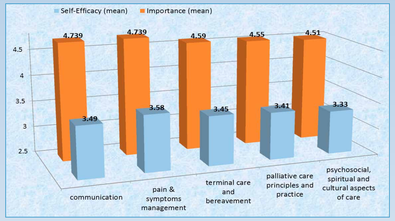


FIGURE 2: RANKS OF IMPORTANCE OF DOMAINS BY YEAR OF RESIDENCY

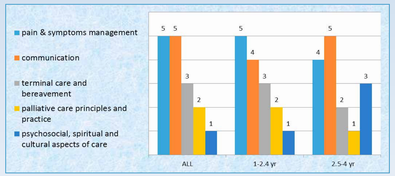
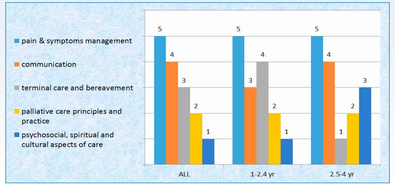


FIGURE 3: RANKS OF PERCEIVED SELF-EFFICACY IN DOMAINS BY YEAR OF RESIDENCY



CONCLUSIONS

- This pilot emphasizes the importance of integrating PC into the curriculum of the family medicine residency program.
- Of the 5 PC domains, communication and pain & symptom management skills should receive greater emphasis in our curriculum.
- Further evaluation will elucidate the value of prioritizing the areas of focus in the curriculum according to a real-time needs assessment and will serve the basis for extending this medical education methodology to additional fields of medical training.

REFERENCES

1. Schaefer KG et al. Raising the bar for the care of seriously ill patients: results of a national survey to define essential palliative care competencies for medical students and residents. *Acad Med.* 2014 Jul; 89(7):1024-31.