



# Using simulation as strategy for teaching end of life care in palliative care course in under graduate nursing program

## Akusoanm

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### Abstract

Death and dying although is a reality yet for many it remains a taboo to be discussed. It is reported that nursing students feel considerable anxiety and sadness when they experience death on a clinical placement. Therefore, teaching end-of-life nursing care and providing practice experiences in caring for dying patients are essential competencies in nursing education programs. It is reported that end-of-life care simulation can produce an effective and safe learning situation where the students increase their knowledge about palliative care principles and feel more comfortable and confident in communicating with patients and their families. Despite this evidence of the effectiveness of simulation in education programs, the current analysis indicates that where palliative and end-of-life care is included in undergraduate curricula it is delivered largely in theoretical form. Hence, it is planned to introduce simulation in palliative care nursing course in which year II students of Post-RN BScN programme at Akusonam- Karachi will be enrolled in January 2018 to provide care to patients and their families in death and death situation. The study employed a quasi-experimental design (pre-post intervention design to see the impact of simulation and debriefing on students' learning). Data collection is completed and analysis of the study in progress. Hence this study will give students experiential learning by engagement with simulated scenarios. Moreover engaging them in the safe learning environment with complex issues will and improve patient safety and outcome.

### Introduction

Effective communication among members of the interprofessional team and with the patient is essential to achieving desired patient outcomes. Curricula for members of the health-care team are replete with objectives focused on developing communication skills; however, curricula that outline specific communication skills needed in palliative and end-of-life (EOL) care remain deficient. Recent national reports have emphasized the need to improve primary palliative care, including patient-centered communication, which focuses on fostering healing relationships, exchanging information, and responding to emotions, for both students and clinicians. As a result, educators are increasingly using simulation-based learning activities to help build critical communication skills in the clinical setting. As frontline providers of care, nurses are key members of the interprofessional team. The purpose of this article is to report the findings of a systematic review designed to identify how simulation

is being used to teach communication skills to nursing students and clinicians who care for patients and families receiving palliative and EOL care. Palliative care communication skills are essential to providing patients with effective symptom management, psychosocial and spiritual support, and advance care planning. For nurses, the ability to develop skills in caring for dying patients and their families is a significant professional rite of passage—one that they remember for the remainder of their careers. As nurses develop skills in caring for dying patients, they gain more confidence in the care they provide. Students who participate in palliative care immersion experiences that allow them to hone their communication skills report they feel better prepared to care for dying patients in their first year of professional practice. Time constraints and limited availability of clinical settings in nursing education may not allow direct experience in palliative and EOL care for large cohorts of nursing students. Therefore, most new nurses must develop communication competencies in palliative and EOL care on the job, which is not ideal and can be unnecessarily anxiety-provoking. Furthermore, nurse clinicians—who are accustomed to advocating for their patients' needs—cite a need for more education on palliative and EOL care. The use of simulation-based learning may enable educators to reach greater numbers of nursing students and clinicians to foster the development of these important communications skills. Simulation-based learning experiences (SBLEs) offer an opportunity to enhance students' and clinicians' communication skills. Simulation typically involves mimicking the real-world scenarios to provide learners with pertinent experiences under controlled or practice conditions. The SBLEs involve a variety of simulated learning methods, including manikin-based, standardized/simulated patients or computer-based programs, virtual reality, or hybrid simulation to achieve realistic environments representative of the learner's professional responsibilities. An important concept in SBLEs is fidelity, defined as "the degree to which a simulated learning experience approaches reality. Fidelity goes beyond the manikin itself and includes environmental fidelity, conceptual fidelity, and psychological fidelity.

### Data Sources

The sponsoring institution's nursing librarian, with the other coauthors of the article, performed a comprehensive systematic literature search on February 15, 2017, of the PubMed, CINAHL, ERIC, Web of Science, and PsycINFO databases. Searches of the grey literature resources—ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, Worldcat Dissertations and Theses, and NLM Gateway—were also performed. All search strategies included terms related to the concepts of simulation, palliative care, EOL, and nursing. The complete strategy is available upon request. No date, study, or subject filters were applied.

### Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to ensure a uniform selection of articles amongst reviewers. The inclusion criteria were articles that (1) described a simulated learning experience that (a) involved technology (b) was delivered to nursing students or practicing nurses (c) and focused on palliative care or EOL communication and (2) included an evaluative component. The exclusion criteria were letters, commentaries, news items, and articles not published in English.

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