Enhancing Advance Care Planning Conversations by Nurses in a Bone Marrow Transplantation Unit

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OBJECTIVES: To describe the impact of advance care planning (ACP) education on nurses’ confidence in ACP knowledge and practice and to identify barriers to facilitate ACP conversation in a bone marrow transplantation unit.

SAMPLE & SETTING: 60 nurses working in the bone marrow transplant unit at Oregon Health and Science University, an academic medical center.

METHODS & VARIABLES: The aim of this quality improvement project was to increase ACP conversations by nurses. The authors used a single-group pre-/post-test design to assess the effectiveness of a 30-minute educational intervention in changing nurses’ confidence and practice. Group interviews were conducted to identify barriers to ACP.

RESULTS: The educational intervention increased nurses’ confidence in knowledge about ACP. The number of nurses who discussed ACP with patients also increased, but it was not statistically significant. Lack of time, inefficient workflow, and concerns about questioning providers’ understanding of patient preferences were identified as barriers for nurses engaging in and documenting ACP conversations.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING: In addition to appropriate education, strategies that help tailor ACP practice to fit into nurse workflow and promote collaboration with other healthcare team members are needed to change nurses’ ACP practice.

KEYWORDS advance care planning; advance directives; decision making; end-of-life care

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