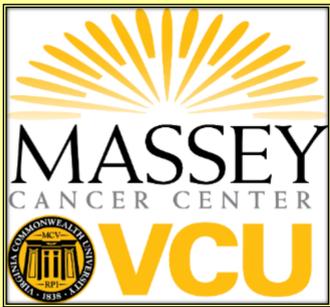


Promoting Primary Palliative Care:

A Novel Advanced Practice Palliative Nursing Clinical Externship

Constance Dahlin, ANP-BC, ACHPN, FPCN, FAAN, Patrick Coyne, ACHPN, ACNS-BC, FAAN, FPCN, J Brian Cassel, PhD
 Massey Cancer Center, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA



Background: Workforce issues necessitate a focus on midcareer advanced practice nurses to promote primary palliative care. Although there are many palliative educational opportunities, there are few which can help practitioners translate education into practice. This is particularly true for APRNs (both CNSs and NPs), especially in rural areas. Outside of APRN fellowships and observerships, there are few clinical experiences. Moreover, there are limitations of patient care exposure due to licensure, time, and expense. We developed the Palliative Care APRN Externship – an innovative partnership between an academic medical center, a palliative care service, and a school of nursing - to incorporate palliative principles into practice.



August 2013 Inaugural Cohort

Overview:

- ❖ Support from foundation grants covers tuition.
- ❖ Participants cover room and board.
- ❖ Small cohorts of 6-7 participants at a time.
- ❖ Utilizes principles of rural hospice and palliative care
- ❖ Emphasis on primary palliative care education - (Abernethy and Quill 2013)
 - basic pain and symptom management
 - basic management of anxiety and depression
 - basic communication skills in prognosis
 - goals of care, and advanced directives

Participants to date:

- ❖ 36 APRNs; 30 from VA, 6 from other states
- ❖ Both CNSs and NPs
- ❖ From both rural and community settings
- ❖ Limited palliative care education
- ❖ Range of settings – ambulatory clinics, hospitals, nursing homes, home

Evaluation Process:

- ❖ IRB approved
- ❖ Pre-course survey before externship
- ❖ Course Evaluation at end of externship
- ❖ Follow-up survey 1 month post course
- ❖ Follow-up survey 6 months post course

Results of baseline (pre-course) survey for first 6 cohorts – 36 participants

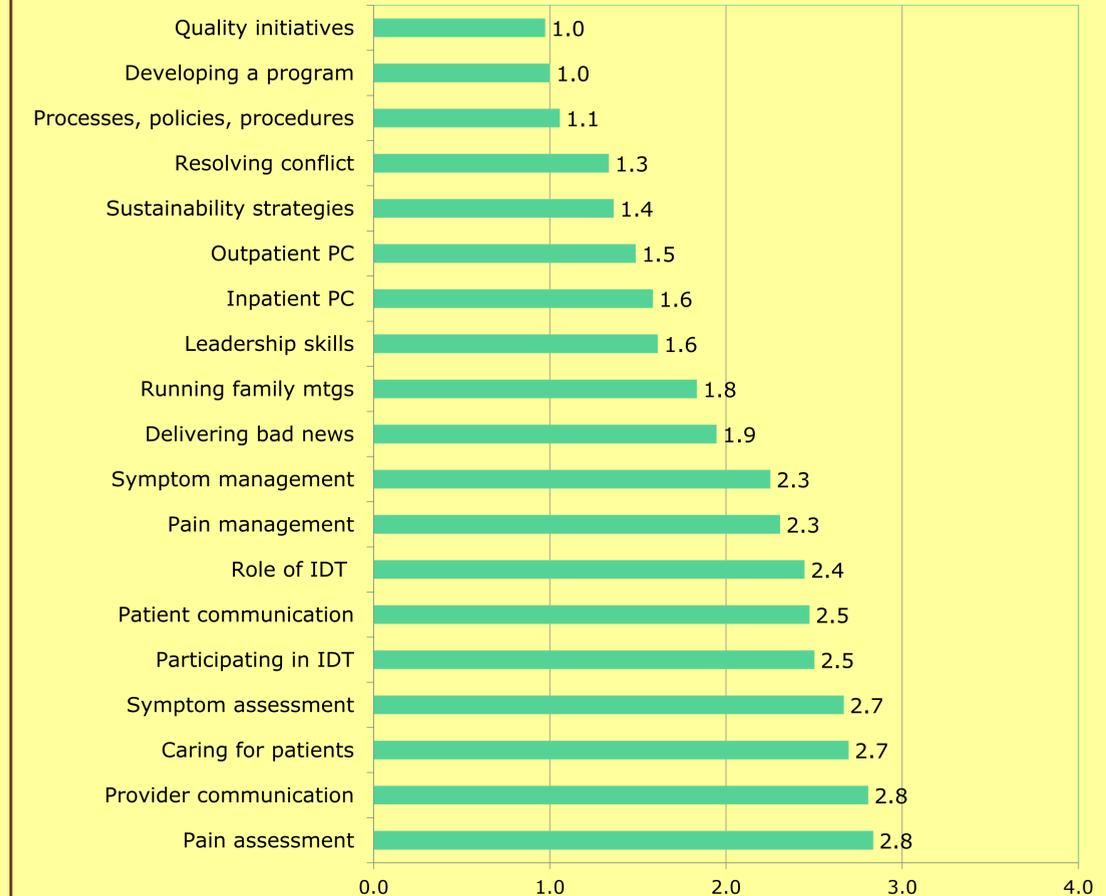
Participant characteristics:

- Years in nursing range from 0-42 (median 21.5)
- Years in PC range from 0-8 (median 0)
- Wide variety of practice settings
- 77% rated PC as important issue (9-10 on 0-10 scale)
- Large percentage said they received no graduate nursing education in key domains

Percent of current time spent in clinical care

Task	Median %	Max %
PC / hospice consultation	5%	25%
Educating Patients	5%	40%
Educating families	5%	15%
Educating providers	1%	30%
Family meetings	0%	20%
Goals of care / ACP	5%	80%
Grief & bereavement	0%	10%
PC consultation	0%	70%
Hospice consultation	0%	20%
H&P	0%	100%
Rounding	0%	50%
Sum of all PC tasks	75%	100%

Average pre-course self-confidence in performing PC-related tasks (0 = not at all, 4 = very confident)



Conclusion

1. The Palliative Care APRN Externship has been well received and is designed to address these deficits.
2. Participants lack formal education and self-confidence in key domains and tasks of palliative care, but many of them are spending substantial portion of their work time in PC-related tasks.
3. Future work will focus on evaluating the impact of the Externship on self-confidence and participants' practice, and collaborating with other organizations to broaden the accessibility of this program.

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