
‘I beg your pardon?’ Nurses’ experiences in facilitating doctors’ learning process – An interview study

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Introduction

Most palliative patients prefer to be cared for at home by their general practitioner (GP) until death . To tackle this complex task,GPs need a set of palliative care competences . A recent review of palliative care education in Europe shows that not all medical schools have a mandatory undergraduate palliative education: in only 47% of the countries palliative care is taught as a subject (mandatory or optional) . Furthermore in Belgium, where our study was done, the offer of continuing medical education (accounting for the lifelong learning of physicians) shows to be insufficient to train GPs in palliative care . Therefore GPs have difficulties maintaining palliative care competences.....

PHCT nurses are trained and experienced palliative care experts. They are however not trained for the role of learning facilitator for physicians. Since GPs indicate the collaboration with PHCT nurses to be a learning moment, it is worthwhile to explore the views of the nurses toward their role as facilitator of GPs' learning...

Objective

- Working alongside specialized palliative care nurses brings about learning opportunities for general practitioners. The views of these nurses toward their role as facilitator of learning is unknown.
- The aim of this study is to clarify the views and preferences of these nurses toward their role as facilitator of physicians' learning.
 - Describe the views and preferences of PHCT nurses toward sharing their knowledge and expertise with GPs.
 - Describe the views and preferences of PHCT nurses toward the balance between care for the patient and care for the team.
 - Describe how these views and preferences influence the uptake of a role as facilitator of GPs' learning.

Method

- Qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews. We interviewed 21 palliative care nurses in Belgium who were trained in the role of learning facilitator.
- Data were analyzed using Grounded Theory principles.

Table 1

Topic guide used for semi-structured interviews with PHCT nurses.

Topics	Probing questions and relationships to the research questions (RQ)
Implementation of the trained skills	What has been easy to put into practice? (RQ1) How and when did you try it? Why do you think this was easy? What was difficult to put into practice? (RQ1) How and when did you try it? Why do you think this was difficult?
Effect on collaboration with other professionals	Did this change the way in which you collaborate with others? (RQ2) Did this change the way in which you care for the patient? (RQ2)
Permanence of the implementation	What helped you to continue putting it into practice? (RQ3) What made it difficult to continue putting it into practice? (RQ3)
Effect on nurses personal feelings	How did you feel adopting this new behavior? (RQ3) Did you notice others reacting to your new behavior? (RQ3) How did that make you feel?

Method

An interview guide was developed based on literature on teamwork (essential elements for effective teamwork), interprofessional relationships (the importance of relationships regarding quality of patient care) and implementation of change (how to change practice through training) [21–24]. To validate the content, this interview guide has been discussed with the program's trainers and with external experts (a coordinator and a psychologist of a PHCT not involved in the training).

Results

- Results: First all interviewees shared the conviction that patient care is their core business. Secondly two core themes were defined: nurses' preferences toward sharing knowledge and their balancing between patient care and team care. Combining these themes yielded a typology of nurses' behavioral style: the clinical expert-style, the buddy-style, the coach-style and the mediator-style.

Conclusion

- Palliative care nurses' interpretation of the role as facilitator of general practitioners' learning diverges according to personal characteristics and preferences. Practice implications: Asking clinical expert nurses to become a facilitator of other professional's learning requires personal mentoring during this transition. Nurses' preferences toward practice behavior should be taken into account.

Thank you !