Inter-professional palliative care simulation: from diagnosis to death

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Introduction

Aim
• This session aims to raise awareness of the use of simulation as a method to teach inter-professional end of life care to pre-registration student nurses and doctors.

Objectives
• Describe the format of the simulation
• Describe the research project undertaken.
• Critically explain the methodology employed.
• Discuss the expected results, based on pilot data.
• Consider future implications for educational practice.
# Outline of the day

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Introduction to the patient  
Fishbowl breaking bad news scenario  
Debrief (within fishbowl) |
| **Scenario 2** | Tutorial: Identifying the dying patient and end of life prescribing  
Scenario: Identifying the dying patient  
Debrief |
| **Scenario 3** | Tutorial: Confirming death and care after death  
Scenario: Confirming death and discussion with relative  
Debrief |
| **Closing** | Final thoughts as group  
Break away session |
Breaking bad news scenario

- Students to meet the patient and ask any questions/gather any extra information
- George Sanders, painless jaundice presenting, accessed jaundice clinic for urgent USS with his wife
- Need to explain result of USS and next steps
- Fishbowl simulation - Faculty do a ‘how not to BBN’ example with students giving us feedback
- Medical and nursing student swap in, able to pause, rewind, swap in and out with debrief in situ
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Identifying dying patient scenario

- Admitted to hospital with general deterioration and increasing pain. Reversible causes excluded, no benefit from antibiotics. Team documented if further deterioration – for care and comfort.
- Vomiting and unable to keep down medications
- Wife very anxious
- Nurse assesses and calls doctor
- Identify and discuss likely EOL and prescribe symptom control medications
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Confirming death scenario

• Wife calls nurse as she thinks George (sim man) isn’t breathing
• Nurse to assess, communicate with wife and call doctor
• Doctor to confirm death
• Inform wife and answer any questions “What do I do now?”
End of life moulage
Adding personal effects
Challenges

- Resource intensive: Staff, rooms and equipment
- Expensive: actors
- Requires expert facilitators
- Emotive and challenging for students
- Inter-professional logistics
- Staff attitudes
- Balancing different learning needs
Project outline

‘Does undergraduate inter-professional simulation in palliative care promote positive changes in team working, understanding and behaviour when caring for patients nearing the end of their life?’

Part 1 – anonymous online survey with free text boxes

Part 2 – observational study of behaviour and attitudes displayed by students
Results

Average self assess confidence scores (n=49)

- Breaking bad news
- Identifying the dying patient
- Controlling symptoms
- Communicating with family
- Care after death

- Before
- After
How might the teaching today change or influence your future practice?

Primary themes

1. Preparedness: students discussed feeling more prepared for graduation and working on the wards

“Even though you get exposure to these sensitive situations you are often protected by your mentor and often only observer. Really nice to be able to take the lead in a protected environment.”

Student Nurse

“I think it's really good to experience these scenarios before we start work to give us an experience to work off.”

Medical Student
How might the teaching today change or influence your future practice?

Primary themes

2. Care of the dying/deceased: students discussed practical knowledge and skill acquisition

“Great to know about the practicalities of care after death”
Medical Student

“More aware of the dying process”
Nursing Student
How might the teaching today change or influence your future practice?

Primary themes

3. Challenging Communication: students reflected on experience and acquisition of skills communication in difficult circumstances (e.g. breaking bad news)

“Not filling the silences...”
Medical student

“Much greater confidence and knowledge about breaking bad news, identifying and explaining the dying process, and dealing with a patient who has died.”
Nursing Student
How might the teaching today change or influence your future practice?

Secondary themes

1. Supporting your colleagues: reflections on need for and confidence in supporting colleagues of both professions

“\[\text{I'm more prepared to deal with the situation and more engage with doctors' feelings and need for support}\]”
Nursing student

“\[\text{Greater understanding of the nurses perspective}\]”
Medical student
How might the teaching today change or influence your future practice?

Secondary themes

2. Roles: where students reflected on greater understanding not only of each other’s roles but also their own role in a team and in EOL care

“Better awareness of medical practices”
Nursing student

“It has given me an excellent understanding of the role I will play in my career as a doctor & the role of my nurse colleagues”
Medical student
How might the teaching today change or influence your future practice?

Secondary themes

3. Importance of the MDT: students place emphasis on the need to work in an MDT or use interprofessional skills and communication

“Give confidence in my own skills and engaging with medical students and Jr doctors”
Nursing Student

“Days like today are really important and I think that we should have more of these. It brings up real life problems and is very beneficial to do it as part of an MDT”
Medical student
Did you gain a better understanding of other professionals role in End of Life care, and if so in what way?

Shared student themes:

- **Supporting colleagues**: recurrent theme in both nursing and medical student reflections
  
  “Knowing the roles of each profession & how best to communicate and support each other. It has been an invaluable experience. Thank you!” **Medical student**

- **Own role in MDT**: reflections from students gain better understanding of their own role
  
  “I was able to see how I fitted in within the grand scheme of things and it made me appreciate other professionals and their roles” **Nursing student**
Did you gain a better understanding of other professionals role in End of Life care, and if so in what way?

Medical students:

- **Practical skills:** students comment on greater knowledge of nursing skills and abilities
  - “The role of the nurse as the first assessor of patient needs and their role before, during and after a patient’s death”

- **Care after death:** medical students improved knowledge of nursing care after death (previously not exposed to this)
  - “The after death care that nurses perform”

- **Role of the nurse in EOL:** students reflect on integral role of the nurse throughout the EOL journey, especially in regards to patient support
  - “Just understanding how much they do when we aren’t there”

Nursing students:

- **Skills of the doctor:** reflections on greater understanding of specific jobs of the doctor
  - “Doctors certifying death”

- **Pressures on the doctors:** insights into the pressures around decision making in EOL unique to medical staff
  - “Their training and their experiences, their decisions and dilemmas”

- **Breaking hierarchy:** students more comfortable interacting with each other
  - “It humanised the medical professionals, I have a greater empathy for their fears and insecurities.”
Results

Observational study –

• Analysis is on-going (first round complete)
• Current themes agree with student identified learning outcomes
• Additional themes emerging from non-formal discussions
  — Career
  — Curriculum
What next?

- 6 month follow up
  - Telephone interviews and focus groups
  - Reflect on your first 6 months of working
  - How has the teaching impacted your working?
Questions?

Thank you

University of Bristol
Great Western Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust
Oxford Brookes University