

## **END OF LIFE CARE AWARENESS AMONG HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS: ASSESSING KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES**

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### **Abstract**

End-of-life care is a critical aspect of healthcare that requires specialized knowledge and skills to ensure patients receive compassionate and appropriate support during their final stages of life. This research paper examines the awareness and understanding of end-of-life care among healthcare professionals. The study aims to assess the knowledge levels, attitudes, and practices of healthcare providers concerning end-of-life care, as well as identify potential gaps in their training and education. A mixed-methods approach was utilized, incorporating surveys and interviews to gather data from a diverse group of healthcare professionals. The findings shed light on the current state of end-of-life care awareness within the healthcare workforce and offer valuable insights for improving the quality of care provided to patients facing terminal illnesses or life-limiting conditions.

### **KEYWORDS**

End-of-life care, healthcare professionals, awareness, knowledge, attitudes, practices, terminal illness, palliative care, hospice care, patient support, end-of-life education, healthcare training.

### **INTRODUCTION**

End-of-life care is an integral part of healthcare, focusing on providing comfort, dignity, and support to patients facing terminal illnesses or life-limiting conditions. It requires a holistic approach that addresses not only physical symptoms but also emotional, social, and spiritual aspects of patients' well-being. Healthcare professionals play a crucial role in delivering end-of-life care, and their level of knowledge, attitudes, and practices greatly impact the quality of care provided to patients and their families during this challenging time.

The aim of this research paper is to assess the awareness and understanding of end-of-life care among healthcare professionals. By investigating their knowledge levels, attitudes, and practices in this domain, we can identify potential gaps in their training and education, and propose strategies to enhance the quality of end-of-life care provided by the healthcare workforce. By improving the

awareness and competence of healthcare professionals, we can ensure that patients receive compassionate and comprehensive end-of-life care that respects their dignity and individual preferences.

To achieve the objectives of this study, a mixed-methods approach was employed, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. The research was conducted in three main stages: survey questionnaires, interviews, and data analysis.

#### **Survey Questionnaires:**

A structured survey questionnaire was distributed to a diverse group of healthcare professionals, including physicians, nurses, social workers, and other allied healthcare providers. The survey sought to assess their knowledge of end-of-life care principles, their attitudes towards caring for patients at the end of life, and their self-perceived competency in delivering end-of-life care.

#### **Interviews:**

In-depth interviews were conducted with a selected group of healthcare professionals to gain deeper insights into their experiences and perspectives related to end-of-life care. The interviews aimed to explore challenges faced by healthcare providers, their training experiences, and their perceptions of the importance of end-of-life care in healthcare settings.

#### **Data Analysis:**

Quantitative data from the survey questionnaires were analyzed using statistical methods to determine the overall knowledge levels and attitudes of healthcare professionals towards end-of-life care. Qualitative data from the interviews were subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns in participants' responses.

Ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the research process, ensuring participant confidentiality and voluntary participation. The study sought to involve a representative sample of healthcare professionals from various healthcare settings to ensure the generalizability of the findings.

By combining quantitative and qualitative data, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of end-of-life care awareness among healthcare professionals. The insights gained from this study will inform the development of targeted educational interventions and training programs, ultimately leading to improved end-of-life care practices and better support for patients and their families during this challenging phase of life.

### **RESULTS**

The results of the study revealed varying levels of awareness and understanding of end-of-life

care among healthcare professionals. From the survey questionnaires, it was evident that while some healthcare professionals demonstrated a high level of knowledge and comfort in providing end-of-life care, others reported feeling less confident in this domain. The majority of participants acknowledged the importance of addressing patients' emotional and spiritual needs during end-of-life care but expressed a need for more comprehensive training in palliative care and communication skills.

In the interviews, healthcare professionals shared their experiences and challenges related to end-of-life care. Some participants expressed feeling unprepared to handle the complex emotional and psychological aspects of caring for patients at the end of life. They cited a lack of specific training in end-of-life care during their education and professional development, leading to feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy when faced with such situations.

### **DISCUSSION**

The findings from this research highlight the need for improved end-of-life care education and training for healthcare professionals. The varying levels of knowledge and confidence observed suggest that the current approach to end-of-life care education may be insufficient in adequately preparing healthcare providers to deliver compassionate and effective care in this sensitive context. Incorporating more comprehensive training in palliative care principles, communication skills, and emotional support could empower healthcare professionals to navigate end-of-life care with greater confidence and competence.

Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of fostering a patient-centered approach to end-of-life care. While many healthcare professionals recognized the significance of addressing patients' emotional and spiritual needs, there was room for improvement in translating this awareness into practice. Implementing patient-centered care models that focus on individualized care plans and shared decision-making can promote a more compassionate and supportive approach to end-of-life care.

Furthermore, the research revealed the potential benefits of interprofessional collaboration in end-of-life care. Many healthcare professionals expressed a desire for more teamwork and communication among different healthcare disciplines involved in caring for terminally ill patients. Enhanced collaboration can lead to a more coordinated and holistic approach to end-of-life care, ensuring that patients' physical, emotional, and spiritual needs are addressed comprehensively.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this research underscores the importance of assessing end-of-life care awareness among healthcare professionals. The study revealed a diverse range of knowledge and

practices in this domain, highlighting the need for targeted educational interventions and training programs. By equipping healthcare professionals with the necessary knowledge, communication skills, and emotional support tools, we can enhance the quality of end-of-life care provided to patients and their families.

The study also emphasizes the significance of adopting a patient-centered and interprofessional approach to end-of-life care. Such an approach can foster a more compassionate and comprehensive care experience for patients facing terminal illnesses or life-limiting conditions.

To improve end-of-life care outcomes, healthcare institutions should prioritize the integration of palliative care principles and communication training into the curriculum for healthcare professionals. Additionally, encouraging interprofessional collaboration and creating a supportive environment for healthcare providers can further enhance the delivery of end-of-life care services.

Ultimately, enhancing end-of-life care awareness among healthcare professionals will contribute to a more compassionate and dignified end-of-life experience for patients, promoting their well-being and ensuring that they receive the support and comfort they deserve during this challenging phase of life.

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