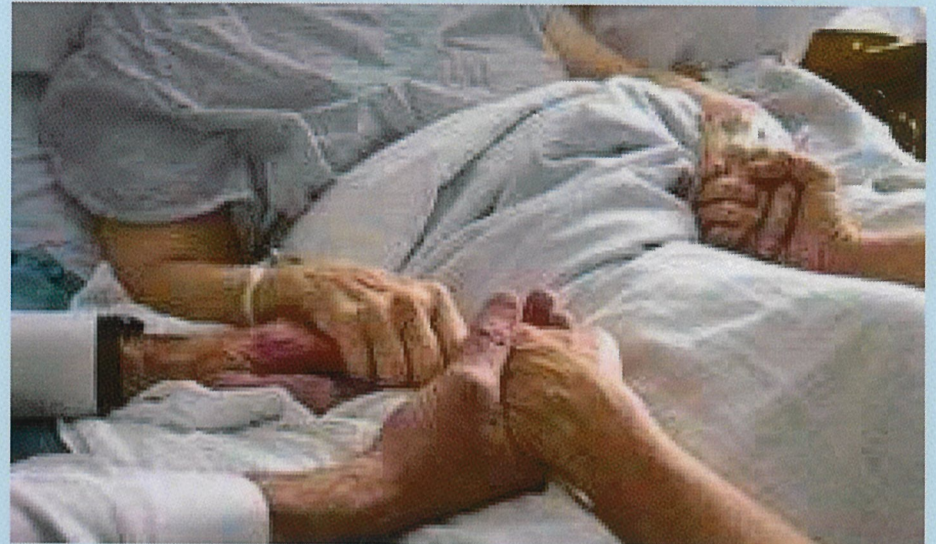


“Is a nurse’s education of the Liverpool Care Pathway key in the delivery of best practice end of life care?”

Tania Jenkins

Introduction

The Liverpool Care Pathway (LCP) was created by the Royal Liverpool University Trust and the Marie Curie Centre in Liverpool, with the aim of improving care of dying patients across all healthcare settings. The LCP is now established in New Zealand as a key clinical tool for supporting health professionals in the care of the imminently dying. Primarily designed for patients with cancer, the LCP is increasingly being used for patients who are in the last days of life regardless of diagnosis. The LCP replaces all other documents (cards and medical notes) and provides health professionals with guidance on all aspects of end-of-life care.



Literature Review

Studies have shown that nurses using the LCP in the hospital setting generally perceive the pathway to have a positive impact on patients and relatives. Further findings were, that the LCP provides a framework that can support carers and families to form a unique and individual plan for those who are dying. It is essential to engage patients (where possible) and their families in the decision-making process with open, honest, clear, and sensitive communication about the dying person’s situation and the pathways aims. It remains questionable whether nurses’ early education preparation sufficiently equips them with the confidence and competence, even at the most fundamental level, for complex reality of end of life care. It was expressed throughout the articles the importance of end of life care at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels for empowerment and confidence of health workers to care well for dying patients. Education and adequate support was identified as being pivotal to the successful implementation of the LCP. Mandatory training in the care of the dying alongside the LCP programme potentially provides an effective mechanism for the delivery of high quality care to achieve good health for all. Studies suggest it is imperative nurses are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to offer the basic human right of high-quality care at end of life.

Implications for Practice

The LCP aids communication with relatives, stops inappropriate care, gives a clear plan of care, and improves the confidence of staff that use it in practice (O’Hara, 2011). The LCP is not meant to replace sensitive and holistic end-of-life care, it exists as a tool to complement this approach (Preston, 2007). Thus continuing education is imperative, both in terms of protecting and enhancing care quality and enabling registered nurses to demonstrate their personal and professional development (Watts, 2013). Organisational support is an imperative implication and is needed to support staff on increasing their knowledge through education.

Conclusion

A nurses education of the LCP is key in the delivery of best practice end of life care. Evidence highlighted that nurses perceived the LCP to have a positive impact on patients and families, and that it provided a frame work that helped support open, honest, clear, and sensitive communication about the LCP and its aims. The nurse has a pivotal role in end of life care, and evidence highlighted the need for education to be at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and was pivotal for the successful implementation of LCP. It was imperative that nurses were equipped with the skills and knowledge to enable best practice end of life care.

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National Liverpool Care Pathway Office, (2012). New Zealand General Practitioner Survey – Technical Report. New Zealand: Author.

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Taylor, A. (2005). Improving practice with the Liverpool Care Pathway. *Nursing Times*. 101, 35, 36-37.

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PECOT:

NURSES EDUCATION ON END OF LIFE CARE

When restructured with PECOT it would become:

PECOT category	Information relating to question	Explanation
Population	Nurses	Nurses are the population that I want to focus on in dealing with end of life care.
Exposure (intervention)	End of life care Liverpool Care Pathway	I will be looking for articles that involve end of life care/ Liverpool Care Pathway implementation.
Comparison / Control	Nurses education	I am interested in what the differences are when nurses are educated in the Liverpool Care Pathway, compared to nurses that are not educated in the Liverpool Care Pathway.
Outcome	Is education key to best practice end of life care	I want to know the outcome of whether the education of the implementation of the Liverpool Care Pathway is key to the successful delivery of end of life care.
Time	No time	I do not think there is a time on this topic.

Using this information I have reformed my question from “Nurses education on end of life care” to:

“Is a nurse’s education of the Liverpool Care Pathway key in the delivery of best practice end of life care?”

Reference

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