

Poster Number: F11

Poster Title: Improving Pediatric Critical Care Nursing Comfort with Difficult Conversations

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Background/Purpose

Children with diverse diagnoses are treated for critical illnesses and traumatic events in Pediatric Intensive Care Units (PICUs) and Pediatric Cardiac Intensive Care Units (PCICU). Therefore, providers frequently have difficult conversations with patients and families. Pediatric critical care nurses are often invited to participate in these discussions, but their role is not always clear. The goal of this project was to evaluate the impact of an educational simulation-based intervention on the knowledge and comfort level of pediatric critical care nurses regarding difficult conversations.

Methods

This project was a quasi-experimental study with a one group pretest-posttest design. 55 pediatric critical care nurses met inclusion criteria (off orientation and trained in ICU). Participants completed a pre-test survey providing demographics and establishing baseline knowledge and comfort level regarding difficult conversations. Participants then completed a 10-minute voiceover PowerPoint presentation, a simulation with a parent actor and a post simulation debrief. Participants submitted a posttest survey which examined the impact of the intervention components. Pretest and posttest surveys were linked utilizing unique identifiers for anonymity. Data was analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics and paired t-tests on SPSS.

Results

24 pediatric critical care nurses of varied experience levels completed all intervention components demonstrating vested interest in project. There was statistically significant improvement in nurse knowledge and comfort level with difficult conversations. Participants found each intervention component to be helpful with a Likert mean score of at least 4.50.

Discussion/Conclusions

The aim was to develop an educational and simulation-based program to teach current pediatric critical care nurses about difficult conversations and to improve their comfort with such conversations. This project was successful in doing so and additionally has the potential to dramatically improve the patient/family experience and their involvement in care. This education will be continued for new nurses at the project site and a collaborative expansion of the project with other regional pediatric centers should be considered.

Key words: critical care, nurses, difficult conversations, simulation, education