

Determining Oncology Nurses Knowledge, Perceptions, and Needs about Palliative and Spiritual Care at Hamad Medical Corporation

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Problem Statement: Oncology nurses strive to treat the whole person as they provide palliative care to cancer patients. Spirituality is a key component in quality palliative care (Hatamipour, Majd, Rassouli, Yaghmaie, & Zendedel, 2015). Determining what oncology nurses currently know and perceive about spiritual care is important to ascertain their needs when it comes to providing palliative and spiritual care.

Background: Many nurses lack training and educational opportunities in palliative and spiritual care. Most palliative care practice today is centered around Western values. In Qatar there is a scarcity of local palliative care research (Ghaly, Diamond, El-Hakoum, & Hassan, 2018).

Purpose: This needs assessment determined oncology nurses' knowledge, perceptions, and educational needs related to spiritual care for seriously ill cancer patients at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) in Doha, Qatar.

Methods/Measures: The HMC Institutional Review Board approved this descriptive study. A Survey Monkey was developed using questions from the reliable, valid 17- item Nurse Spiritual Care Therapeutics Scale and a Middle Eastern healthcare survey, related to palliative and spiritual care educational needs. Nurses (N=160) employed on four units (oncology, hematology, BMT, palliative care) were invited to participate in October 2020. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results: Of 160 nurses, 152 completed the survey yielding a 95% response rate. Nurses described multiple barriers exist in their knowledge about spiritual care; 80.1% believe there is a lack of hospital values around supporting patient/family spiritual and religious beliefs; 90.4% lack time to provide spiritual care; 86.3% lack comfort providing spiritual care, and 86.2% lack training in providing spiritually sensitive care. Nurses (76%) expressed the need to learn about conducting brief spiritual care assessments; Islamic beliefs and practices; and how to have respectful, spiritual conversations with patients/families.

Conclusion: Survey results will be used to inform future learning sessions about spiritual care to HMC nurses.