



Baylor University

ROBBINS COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Occupational Therapy

Educating Healthcare Professionals on Rehabilitation and End-of-Life Care

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Background and Problem

- **Problem:** Out of 20 million individuals needing hospice care services only 14% receive the adequate end-of-life (EOL) care they need.⁴
- **Gaps in the Literature:**
 - Collaboration among patients, families, and healthcare professionals
 - Limited evidence supporting the role of physical and speech therapy in (EOL) services
 - Understanding how the reimbursement process works with EOL and therapy rehabilitation through use of different providers
 - Lack of advocacy for patient needs who receive EOL care services
- **Three Emerging Themes:** patient-and-family-centered care approach to improve collaboration, communication, and care coordination focused on EOL care^{3,4,5}, education in the distinct types of EOL care^{1,2}, and education on multidisciplinary treatment interventions are needed to address the gaps.
- **Frame of Reference:** The Ecology of Human Performance

Purpose

This doctoral capstone project aimed to educate healthcare professionals, patients, families, and key stakeholders on EOL care services and the role of rehabilitation services in working with adults and geriatrics transitioning to EOL care to improve the decision-making process for these services, promote collaboration among key stakeholders, and improve the level of competency on this topic to promote overall improved patient outcomes.

Method

- **Setting:** Village on the Park Denton located in Denton, Texas, an assisted living and memory care facility for adults and geriatrics.
- **Participants:** 36 Healthcare professionals (licensed vocational and registered nurses, medication technicians, residential assistants, physical therapists, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapists, hospice company representatives), and 14 patients and 5 family members of Village on the Park Denton.
- **Instrument Used:** 20-question pre-course and post-course survey: Likert scale of 1-5 rating for level of knowledge, level of confidence, level of satisfaction, and open-ended responses in EOL care services. 15-question post-course evaluation survey: Likert scale of 1-5 rating and a brief open-ended response providing course feedback.
- **Procedures:** 14 patients attended an “Understanding Hospice” health talk, and 36 healthcare professionals attended an education session addressing types of EOL care, qualifying diagnoses, reimbursement, role and benefits of rehabilitation services, effective treatment interventions, collaboration, and advocacy support. Participants were provided with a power-point presentation handout of the course content. Only 3 patients completed the pre-course survey, and 7 patients completed the post-course evaluation survey. Only 17 healthcare professionals completed the pre-course survey, and 19 healthcare professionals completed the post-course survey.
- **Data Analysis:** The data was analyzed by comparing pre-and-post course surveys data completed by participants. Participant responses were categorized by numerical data and qualitative data results from the Likert scales. Percentages were formulated through use of qualitative data themes and quantitative data results from the pre-and-post course surveys.

Results

Post-course Survey Completed by Healthcare Professionals Revealed:

1. 53% demonstrated no change in their level of knowledge.
2. 22% knowledge increased from slightly to moderately knowledgeable.
3. 78% knowledge increased from moderately to very knowledgeable
4. 29% knowledge increased from moderately to extremely knowledgeable.

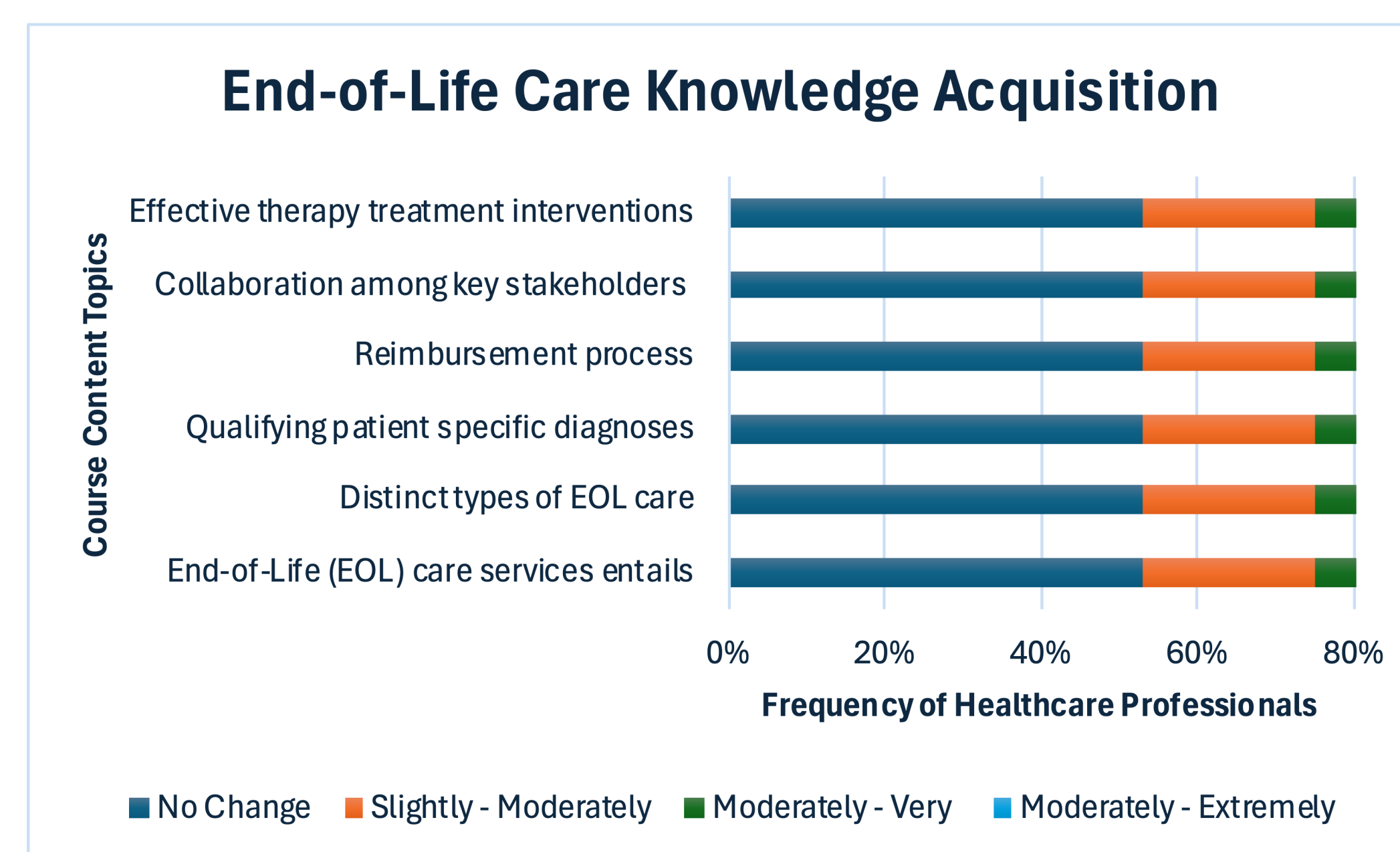


Figure 1. End-of-Life Care Knowledge Acquisition for Healthcare Professionals.



Table 1. 47% of healthcare professionals demonstrated a change in their level of confidence from fairly to completely confident. 100% felt understanding EOL was very important. 40% of families and 11% of healthcare professionals were dissatisfied with the care patients with EOL received from other healthcare professionals.



Conclusions

- The major themes addressed in this study included general knowledge, key stakeholder's roles, the role of rehabilitation, the reimbursement process, effective treatment interventions, confidence and satisfaction level, and collaboration and advocacy for adults and geriatrics who receive EOL care services.
- Healthcare professionals, patients, and families demonstrated little to no knowledge in understanding the difference in terms of EOL care, the reimbursement process, identifying patient specific diagnoses who qualify for EOL care, the role of rehabilitation, and understanding collaborative strategies among key stakeholders in EOL care services.
- Results from this study proves education on the role of rehabilitation in EOL care services improves the knowledge, confidence, and self-efficacy in patients, families, and healthcare professionals working with adults and geriatrics.
- **Limitations in the Study:** small sample size of participants, small number of participants who completed the pre-and-post course surveys, no Q & A after the education session.

Implications for Occupational Therapy

- Occupational therapists need to begin having early conversations in discussing and planning for end-of-life care with clients, identify and provide resources to clients and families, and implement care coordination with the multidisciplinary team to improve collaboration, communication, and support for patients who receive EOL care.⁵
- Occupational therapy professionals (OTPs) play a significant role in educating other healthcare professionals on the meaning of occupation in EOL care.²
- OTs should collaborate with other healthcare professionals to learn and understand multidisciplinary interventions and equipment needs for patients who require EOL care services.³
- **Further Research:**
 - Findings from this study should be published into scholarly journals and/or presented as a continuing education course.
 - The study should be implemented in other adult and geriatric settings for generalizable outcomes.
 - OTPs should implement further research of EOL care and educate on their role and value in EOL care with other healthcare professionals.

References

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