

Hemşirelerin Palyatif Bakımla İlgili Bilgileri

Nurses' Knowledge About Palliative Care

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Özet

Amaç: Palyatif bakım, ölüme kadar hastanın yaşam kalitesini arttırmaya yardımcı olan bütüncül bir yaklaşım sağlar ve farklı hastalık gruplarında farklı yaklaşımlar gerektirir. Bu nedenle, hemşirelerin konuyla ilgili bilgi ve yaklaşımları önemlidir. Bu çalışmada, hemşirelerin palyatif bakım hakkında bilgilerinin belirlenmesi amaçlandı.

Gereç ve Yöntemler: Araştırma gerekli izinler alındıktan sonra, Doğu Akdeniz bölgesinde yer alan üniversite hastanesinde çalışan 226 hemşire ile yapıldı. Araştırmanın verileri, literatür taranarak araştırmacılar tarafından hazırlanan anket formuyla toplandı. Verilerin değerlendirilmesinde SPSS 24.0 paket programı kullanıldı.

Bulgular: Araştırmaya katılan hemşirelerin %68.6'sının palyatif bakım hakkında bilgi sahibi olduğu, %65.5'inin palyatif bakımı hastalık ile baş etmeyi kolaylaştırıcı hasta bakımı olarak tanımladı. Hemşirelerin %40.3'ü palyatif bakım gereken hastaya hiç bakım vermediğini, %85.0'i terminal dönem hastalarına palyatif bakım verilmesi gerektiğini, %43.4'ü terminal dönemdeki hasta bakımı konusunda eğitim almak istediğini belirtti. Hemşirelerin %72.1'inin çalışırken palyatif bakımı ile ilgili eğitim almak istedikleri belirlendi.

Sonuç: Sonuç olarak hemşirelerin çoğunluğunun palyatif bakım hakkında bilgi sahibi olduğu görüldü. Ayrıca hemşirelerin olumlu bir tutuma sahip oldukları ve bu konuda daha fazla bilgi edinmek ve kendilerini geliştirmek istedikleri belirlendi. Palyatif bakımla ilgili hizmet içi eğitimlerle hemşirelerin bilgilerinin geliştirilmesi ve artırılması önerilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hemşireler, Palyatif bakım, Bilgi

Abstract

Objective: Palliative care provides a holistic approach that helps improve the patient's quality of life until death, and requires different approaches in different disease groups. Therefore, nurses' knowledge and approach on the subject is important. In this study, it was aimed to determine the knowledge of nurses about palliative care.

Material and Methods: After obtaining the necessary permits research, working in a University hospital located eastern Mediterranean region was performed with 226 nurses. The data of the study were collected by using the survey form prepared by the researchers by scanning the literature. SPSS 24.0 package program was used to evaluate the data.

Results: 68.6% of the nurses participating in the study knew about palliative care, 65.5% defined palliative care as facilitating patient care. 40.3% of the nurses stated that they did not give any care to the patient who needed palliative care, 85.0% of them stated that they should be given palliative care to terminal period patients, 43.4% wanted to receive training on terminal period patient care. 72.1% of the nurses stated that they wanted to receive palliative care training while working.

Conclusion: As a result of the research, it was concluded that the majority of the nurses had knowledge about palliative care. In addition, it was determined that the nurses had a positive attitude and they wanted to learn more about this issue and improve themselves. It is recommended to reinforce and increase the knowledge level of nurses with in-service training on palliative care.

Key words: Nurses, Palliative care, Knowledge

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INTRODUCTION

Palliative care which is also expressed through various terms such as “end of life care” and “support care” is defined as controlling pain and uneasiness(1-4). World Health Organization (WHO) defines palliative care as an approach which identifies the life quality of patients which are faced with life-threatening conditions and their families and other problems in the physical, psychosocial and spiritual dimensions, evaluates and treats these and is based on not the prognosis of the illness but the needs of the patient(2,5-8). Palliative care directly affects the life quality of people, as it is acknowledged that every patient has the right to spend the last days of his/her life at a certain quality level and peace and this is considered to be among the values of human rights(9,10). Palliative care services should be given through a respectful, open and sensitive approach and through a holistic approach to those who carry illness potential and in a susceptible manner in terms of the individuals’ personality, their cultural and religious values, beliefs and practices(2,11,12). According to 2016 data from Turkey, there are 168 palliative care units in 68 cities(13). In addition, there are pain centers at hospitals and these centers give palliative care services directed at relieving pain. Palliative care has been seen fit for years for only patients who are at the last stage of their lives. However, today it is considered that it should be given as early as possible by aiming at relieving pain and improving the life quality of individuals who have chronic and life-threatening illnesses and live with these problems(11,14). Medical conditions which require palliative care in particular involve cases in which patients have lost vitality, their families or nursing need care; cancer and patients with dementia, Alzheimer patients, patients with heart diseases and liver and kidney failure; spinal cord injuries and patients who are hospitalized at the pediatric special branch services(4,14,15). It is inevitable for nurses who work in different units of a hospital to come across these patients. Palliative care services which require a multidisciplinary approach do not only increase life-quality but is quite efficient for the economy of hospitals and countries since it reduces the frequent application of patients to emergency services, duration of hospitalization and invasive procedures(16,17). For all these reasons, the knowledge and approach of nursing are extremely important. There are no training programs for palliative care nursing in nursing education in Turkey, nurses and other health workers seek to join the postgraduate training program on palliative care. In a study conducted in our country, 52.3% of nurses were not trained on palliative care(18).

For palliative care services which require a multidisciplinary approach, the identification of the knowledge and views of nursing on palliative care, identification of the condition and the needs are important in terms of creating educational programs about the needs. The purpose of this study is to identify knowledge of nurses at on palliative care.

Study Questions

- What is of knowledge of nurses about palliative care?
- Do the socio-demographic characteristics of nurses affect their knowledge of palliative care?

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research Type and Sample

This study was conducted in a descriptive research type between 01 July and 30 August 2019 with nurses working in a university hospital.

The Universe and Sample of the Research

The universe of this study consists of 511 nurses working in a university hospital in the Eastern Mediterranean region. The sample size was calculated as 219 nurses using the sample calculation formula with a known population. Nurses who took leave of absence and did not work within the date range of data collection were not included in the study. The sample of the study consisted of 226 nurses who accepted to participate in the study and filled out the forms completely. Nurses who did not want to participate in the study were excluded. The data were collected through questionnaires sent to nurses via the online system.

Data Collection Tools

The data of the research were collected with a questionnaire prepared by the researchers. Seven questions of the questionnaire were about the sociodemographic characteristics of the nurses and 10 questions were aimed at determining their level of knowledge about palliative care.(age, gender, marital status, educational status, What is palliative care?, Do you have information about palliative care?, For palliative care, please mark the ones that are right for you, Where did you get information about palliative care?, etc) (**Table 1.**) (2,3,7,8,11-14,16).

The Ethical Dimension of the Study

The approval of the University Clinical Applications Ethics Committee was received to conduct the study dated 19.06.2019 (decision no: 2019/11) and the university’s approval was received for the research. Institutional permission was obtained from the hospital for the research. Verbal consents of the nurses were obtained in accordance with the guidelines on the Helsinki Declaration of Human Rights and the survey questions were applied.

Statistical Analysis

While evaluating the findings obtained in the study, IBM SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) V24.0 licensed program was used for statistical analysis. In the evaluation of the data, descriptive statistics, number, percentage and Fisher exact tests were used. The significant level in the evaluations was accepted as $p < 0.05$.

Table 1. Multiple-choice questions which are asked to nurses

1. What is palliative care, do you know about this?
2. For palliative care, please mark the correct ones in your opinion.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relaxing and temporary treatment ● Symptomatic treatment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Medication or methods that temporarily relieve or eliminate disease symptoms without improving ● Pain relief ● Psychological care ● End-stage patient care ● Spiritual care ● Supportive care for the relatives of the patient ● I have no idea
3. Have you provided care to the patient in need of palliative care?
4. Where did you hear about palliative care?
5. Have you taken any course on palliative care during your education?
6. Which patients should palliative care be given?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cancer patients ● Patients in the terminal period ● Very old patients ● Patients with diabetes ● Pediatric patients ● Paralyzed patients ● I have no idea
7. Palliative care should be given with a multidisciplinary approach?
8. Who should be in the palliative care team?
9. What are the most necessary trainings to work in a palliative care center?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intensive care training ● Terminal period patient care ● Pain management ● Wound care ● I have no idea ● Explain other
10. Would you consider training in palliative care?

RESULTS

The socio-demographic distribution of the nurses who participated in the study are given in **Table 2**.

It was determined that 58.8% of the nurses participating in the study were between the ages of 20-29, 65.0% were female, 62.8% were single and 53.5% had a bachelor's degree. It was stated that 39.4% of the nurses had been working for 5-10 years, 46.5% were working in the patient inpatient department and 59.7% gave care to patients in need of palliative care.

The knowledge status of nurses on palliative care are given in **Table 3**.

Table 2. Socio-demographic Characteristics of Nurses (N = 226)

Features	n	%
Age		
20 - 29	133	58.8
30 - 39	81	35.8
40 and over	12	5.4
Gender		
Female	147	65.0
Male	79	35.0
Marital status		
The married	84	37.2
Single	142	62.8
Educational status		
High school	82	36.3
Bachelor's degree	121	53.5
Master's/doctorate degree	23	10.2
Working years		
0-5 year	19	8.4
6-10 year	54	23.9
11-15 year	89	39.4
16 and over	64	28.3
Unit related to work		
Intensive care	80	35.4
Inpatient Department (service)	105	46.5
Surgery room	34	15.0
Polyclinic	7	3.1
State of giving care to patients who need palliative care		
Yes	135	59.7
No	91	40.3

Table 3. Knowledge Status of Nurses About Palliative Care (N=226)

Features	n	%
Having information about palliative care		
Yes, I know about it	155	68.6
I know about it but not fully	63	27.9
I have heard about it but I do not have knowledge	7	3.1
Never heard of it	1	0.4
*Defining palliative care		
Terminal stage patient care	148	65.5
Facilitating dealing with the illness	128	56.6
Psychological care	105	46.5
Pain treatment	90	39.8
Soothing treatment	89	39.4

Symptomatic treatment	71	31.4
Support given to the family of the patients	62	27.4
Spiritual care	35	15.5
No idea	7	3.1
*Which patients should be given palliative care		
Terminal stage	192	85.0
Cancer patient	137	60.6
Very old patient	137	60.6
Paralyzed patient	116	51.3
Diabetics patient	43	19.0
Child patient	38	16.8
No idea	6	2.7
Receiving training on palliative care during Nursing Education		
Taking as a subject of the course	120	53.1
Those taking it as a separate class	54	23.9
Those who received no education about it	52	23.0
Nurses who want to receive training on palliative care while working		
Yes	163	72.1
No	63	27.9
* Training topics they want to receive in order to give care to patients who require palliative care		
Terminal period patient care	98	43.4
Patient care in intensive care	65	28.8
Pain management	24	10.6
No idea	24	10.6
Wound care	15	6.6

*more than once choice has been marked.

68.6% of the participants stated that they know about palliative care, 27.9% stated that they are not fully knowledgeable about palliative care and 3.1% stated that they have heard about it but are not knowledgeable about palliative care. 65.5% of the participants defined palliative care as last stage patient care, 56.6% as facilitating dealing with illnesses, 46.5% as psychological care, 39.4% as soothing treatment, 31.4% as symptomatic treatment, 27.4% as support given to the relatives of the patient and 15.5% as spiritual care. The participants stated that palliative care should be given to terminal stage patients in the rate of 85.0%, to very old patients in the rate of 60.6%, to cancer patients in the rate of 60.6% and to paralyzed patients in the rate of 51.3%. 53.1% of the participants stated that they received information about palliative care during their education, whereas 23.0% stated that they did not receive any training about it. 72.1% stated that they wanted to receive training on palliative care while 43.4% said they wanted to receive training on terminal period patient care and 28.8% on intensive care patient care.

In the statistical analysis, it was determined that there was no statistical difference between the nurses' gender, age, marital status, working time, education level, and the unit they

worked with and their palliative care knowledge ($p > 0.05$). It was determined that 103 nurses who had knowledge about palliative care had the ability to provide care to patients in need of palliative care. It was found that 74 nurses who had knowledge about palliative care received training in palliative care during their education ($p < 0.05$) (**Table 4**).

DISCUSSION

In this study, the factors which affect knowledge, attitude and behavior about palliative care were determined. In Turkey, palliative care centers are not wide spread and pain and symptom controls are generally carried out at the services in which the patients are hospitalized (3,13). Developments in technology, increase in the variety and manner of chronic illnesses and increase in the expected duration of life have greatly changed health objectives (19,20). Great responsibilities fall to nursing in terms of assuming a holistic approach to the patients and their families, accurately evaluating the symptoms and meeting physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs, carrying out applications to prevent pain and improving quality of life.

The socio-demographic characteristics of nurses it was determined that the different between the gender, marital status and duration of work of the nurses and knowledge of palliative care is not different. In Yıldizer and Oğur's (2018) study on health personnel, a significant relationship was not found between the socio-demographic characteristics and having knowledge on palliative care (3). This finding is similar to our study findings. Experience which is considered to be an important finding in having knowledge about palliative care not affecting the level of knowledge is thought to be due to not coming across patients with palliative care needs and not having given palliative care before.

In the study, it was determined that there is a significant difference between the nurses who gave care to patients with palliative care needs and stated that they had knowledge about palliative care and 23.0% of the participants stated that they have not received any training on palliative care. In many studies, it is stated that health personnel do not have sufficient education and knowledge on palliative care skills (21,22). In Bouça et al.'s (2017), studying which studies on palliative care were evaluated, it was determined that activities on palliative care are mostly carried out in oncology and mental health units and in general clinics and that this kind of care is mostly given to the patients hospitalized in oncology services (6). In order for nursing to be able to give the required care to patients who need palliative care in their institutions and provide the control of symptoms, giving place to classes in the curriculum about palliative care and giving information about the importance of palliative care and its principles have become one of the basic needs. Palliative care is both a public health problem and a human right. Providing palliative care not only to terminal stage patients but those with chronic illnesses and require long-term care, the equal and safe approach of the nursing in terms of cultural

Table 4. Evaluation of The Status of Knowledge About Palliative Care According to Socio-demographic Characteristics (N=226)

Knowledge status about "Palliative care"					
	Yes, I know about it (n)	I know about it but not fully (n)	I heard about it but do not have knowledge about it (n)	Never heard of it (n)	
Gender					
Female	105	38	3	1	$\chi^2 = 3.211$ $p = 0.354$
Male	50	25	4	0	
Age					
20-29	92	37	4	0	$\chi^2 = 2.084$ $p = 0.366$
30-39	57	21	3	0	
40 and over	6	5	0	1	
Marital status					
Married	62	20	2	0	$\chi^2 = 2.035$ $p = 0.605$
Single	93	43	5	1	
Duration of work					
<1 year	12	7	0	0	$\chi^2 = 5.411$ $p = 0.366$
1-4 year	39	14	1	0	
5-10 year	63	23	3	0	
>10 year	41	19	3	1	
Education status					
High school- associate degree	53	24	4	1	$\chi^2 = 11.117$ $p = 0.209$
Bachelor's degree	83	35	3	0	
Master's/doctorate degree	19	4	0	0	
Be able to apply care to the patient who needs palliative care					
Yes	103	29	3	0	$\chi^2 = 10.047$ $p = 0.008$
No	52	34	4	1	
Where the nurse learn about palliative care					
During my education	74	24	0	0	$\chi^2 = 26.080$ $p = 0.011$
While working	68	34	5	0	
From close circles	7	3	2	0	
From the media	3	0	0	0	
From the trainings given by the Institution	3	2	0	1	
Unit related to work					
Intensive care	56	22	2	0	$\chi^2 = 9.440$ $p = 0.447$
Inpatient department	74	28	2	1	
Surgery room	22	10	2	0	
Polyclinic	3	3	1	0	

differences to the patients and their families and supporting them are necessary(22).

In the research, it was determined that more than half of the nurses had about palliative knowledge care. When the related literature was reviewed, it was seen that the rate of nurses and candidate nurses who stated that they know about palliative care in other studies range between 30-60%(3,5,11,18). According to the findings of the study, the knowledge of nurses is higher. This can be evaluated as a positive aspect in terms of giving care to patients who are in need of palliative care and meeting their needs.

It may lead to negative thoughts in nurses that palliative care patients do not recover and do not see the results of the applications. For this reason, the nurses expressed that the patient should receive palliative care without being happy with their loved ones in their own home, with effective care and treatment(23). From the point of view of patient relatives; since they care for the same patient for many years, they experience fatigue, their quality of life decreases, and their care can be disrupted. For this reason, the relatives of the patients do not want their patients to be discharged in palliative terms, so the length of hospital stay is extended(23). In the study, it is seen that nurses have sufficient information about the need for end-of-life care. However, participation in the treatment of the patient with his family was low. In terms of this definition, it is considered that the nurses do not have sufficient knowledge about dealing with the patients and families together and that they need to be supported in this area. When the studies are analyzed, it can be seen that nurses' training on palliative care is insufficient. Our study's findings are similar to the findings in the literature. Palliative care is not only for patients and the services given should include the families of the patients as well. Acceptance, acquiring knowledge and struggle against grief are important parts of palliative care. On the other hand, palliative care services evaluate all the problems of the patients and their families together and aim at solving them. Therefore, palliative care is not only about the symptoms but about dealing with the worries of the patients and their families through communication, acceptance and economic support, psychosocial help services and increasing life-quality by solving these concerns(2,24-26).

In the study, the vast majority of nurses stated that terminal period patients should be given care. When the literature was reviewed, it was seen that 90% of the patients who applied for palliative care services are cancer patients but that Alzheimer patients, paralyzed patients and diabetic patients can also need palliative care services(27-29). The findings of our study are in parallel with the findings in the literature. In Yıldız and Oğur's(2018), study on health personnel, a majority of the participants defined palliative care as terminal period patient care(3). When the studies on the subject are examined, it is stated that nurses need palliative care for patients with chronic diseases and terminal patients (30-32).

As a conclusion, It was observed that most of the nurses

had information about palliative care. It was determined that socio-demographic characteristics did not affect palliative care knowledge. It was determined that most of the nurses participating in the study wanted to receive more training on palliative care. Certified in-service training is recommended to increase the level of knowledge of nurses. In addition, it is recommended that training on palliative care be included in the nursing undergraduate program.

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Conflict of interest

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Author contributions

Concept and design, Filiz Taş, Dilek Soylu, Ayşe Soylu, Resources, materials, Dilek Soylu, Ayşe Soylu, Data Collection and processing, Filiz Taş, Dilek Soylu, Analysis and Interpretation of data, Filiz Taş, Dilek Soylu, Ayşe Soylu
Writing Manuscript, Filiz Taş, Ayşe Soylu
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