NYU Grossman School of Medicine

Palliative Care in Emergency Medicine

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Geriatric and Palliative Medicine
Financial Disclosure

• I or my spouse/partner have no financial relationships with commercial interests to report.
Topics Covered:

1. Primary Palliative Care for Emergency Medicine (PRIM-ER)
2. EM TALK
3. Emergency Medicine Palliative Care Access (EMPallA)
4. Additional Projects
Primary Palliative Care for Emergency Medicine (PRIM-ER)
Primary Palliative Care for Emergency Medicine (PRIM-ER)
UG3/UH3 funded by NCCIH and NIA
PRIM-ER Intervention Components

1. Evidence-based, multidisciplinary primary palliative care education (EPEC-EM, ELNEC);
2. Simulation-based workshops on communication in serious illness (EM Talk);
3. Clinical decision support (CDS); and
4. Provider audit and feedback.
18 Health Systems

Clinical Sites
- Allegheny Singer Research Institute
- Baystate Medical Center
- William Beaumont Hospital
- Brigham and Women’s Hospital
- Christiana Care Health Service, Inc.
- Henry Ford Health System
- John School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
- Mayo Clinic
- NYU School of Medicine
- Ochsner Clinic Foundation
- Rutgers University
- Ohio State University
- University of California, San Francisco
- University of Florida College of Medicine
- Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania
- University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
- University of Utah
- Yale University
Primary and Secondary Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UH3 Aim</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Instrument/Coding</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3a.</td>
<td>Acute Care Admission</td>
<td>Yes/No (Inpatient, non-palliative admission)</td>
<td>Inpatient and Outpatient Research Identifiable Files (RIF)</td>
<td>Index ED visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b.</td>
<td>ED Revisit</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Inpatient and Outpatient RIF</td>
<td>Up to 6 months from index ED visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inpatient Days</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Inpatient RIF</td>
<td>Up to 6 months from index ED visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hospice Use</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>Hospice RIF</td>
<td>Up to 6 months from index ED visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home Health Use</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>Home Health RIF</td>
<td>Up to 6 months from index ED visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c.</td>
<td>Survival</td>
<td>Days (Count)</td>
<td>Vital Status RIF</td>
<td>Up to 6 months from index ED visit or death</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Primary and secondary outcomes to be measured as change in measures from baseline to 4 weeks post-implementation for UH3 Phase, Aim 3.

• Hypothesis: Older adult visitors with serious, life-limiting illness cared for by providers with primary palliative care skills will be less likely to be admitted to an inpatient setting, more likely discharged home or to a palliative care service, will have higher home health and hospice use, and fewer inpatient days and ICU admissions at 6months, and longer survival than those seen prior to implementation.
EM TALK
WHY Emergency Medicine (EM) Talk?

• Emergency Medicine (EM) providers have received little training on how to talk to seriously ill patients and their families about GOC.
  – EM Talk is one of the 4 PRIM-ER components and was developed from Vital Talk.
  – Vital Talk is the premier training organization for clinicians seeking to advance their communication skills.
  – To expand communication skills training to EM, Dr. Grudzen and colleagues developed a program to give EM providers the training.
  – The curriculum was built on lessons from prior studies and experiences. A group of EM providers designed a 4 hour workshop including the use of simulated patients/families, role-playing and small group learning with constructive feedback from master clinicians.

• For PRIM-ER the goal was to train 75% of the full-time EM faculty at each of the 33 sites enrolled in the study. All trainings had to occur during each site’s randomized 3-week intervention period.
Course Description

• In 2014, a course focusing on educational intervention focusing on communication skills specific to emergency medicine.

• Components of the 4 hour course

  (1) Large group presentations by faculty trainers;
  (2) Small group communication skills practice using patient actors;
  (3) Debriefing and reflection.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core communication skills</th>
<th>Didactic</th>
<th>Skills practice</th>
<th>Reflective exercise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clearly provide biomedical information to families without using jargon</td>
<td></td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>xxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathically provide bad news</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>xxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicitly discuss the uncertainty inherent in emergency medicine</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td></td>
<td>xxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathically respond to strong emotions including anger, sadness and fear</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>xxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectively lead a family meeting</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>xxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess a patient’s values with a family</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td></td>
<td>xxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss transitioning to comfort care</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td></td>
<td>xxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss ‘do-not-resuscitate’ orders</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td></td>
<td>xxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathically attend to family’s emotional and existential needs</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td></td>
<td>xxx</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interactive Didactic Presentations

• Essential communication skills for EM physicians are taught in demonstration seminars co-led by master clinicians.

• Didactic presentations include demonstrations of roleplay, videotaped examples of good physician–family communication, and interviews with simulated family members.

• Participants receive written material addressing;
  (1) Effectively providing information and assessing family members’ understanding,
  (2) Discussing goals of therapy
  (3) Discussing withholding and withdrawal of life support, including Do Not Attempt Resuscitation orders.
Communication skills practice

**Table 2** Preliminary schedule for EM Talk*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Session 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction (L)</td>
<td>Reflective exercise (SR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivering serious/bad news (L)</td>
<td>Transitioning to comfort care (L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivering serious/bad news (S)</td>
<td>Transitioning to comfort care (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing goals of care (L)</td>
<td>Open role play (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing goals of care (S)</td>
<td>Taking the skills back to the ED (L)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Interactive didactic large group session (L); small group communication skills practice session (S); small group reflective exercise (SR).
ED, emergency department.

Feedback Integrating Knowledge, Attitude and Skills

• Participants receive direct feedback on their performance by the actors, the faculty facilitator and the other participants.

• At the end of each EM Talk course implemented for PRIM-ER, EM physicians were asked to complete a questionnaire in order to obtain Continuing Medical Education credits.
PRIM-ER EM Talk COVID-19 Study Adaptations

• Original plan: EM Talk Course was offered in-person to physicians and Advance Practice Providers

• Adaptation: Switched to a virtual Zoom platform and breakout rooms for concurrent sessions.
### Barriers for Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Covid</th>
<th>During/Post-Covid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenging to schedule 75% of EM providers to take in-person 4 hour</td>
<td>Switching to a zoom platform meant:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>course.</td>
<td>• Providers out sick with COVID and/or must cover for other colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• EM providers had distractions at home and/or no quiet space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Children playing in the background/walking in and out of the room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dogs barking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EM Talk Content Analysis
What is Content Analysis?

1. Data is collected
2. Researcher reads through or examines the data, making themselves familiar with it
3. The researcher identifies coding units
4. The data is analysed by applying the coding units
5. A tally is made of the number of times that a coding unit appears
Theoretical Framework

Concrete Experience
- Integrating to Past Practice

Active Experimentation
- Communication Skills Practice

Reflective Observation
- Reflection

Abstract Conceptualisation
- Didactic Learning

Didactic Learning

Integrating to Past Practice

Communication Skills Practice

Reflection
Research Question

- To what extent does the reflections of EM physicians demonstrate the knowledge, attitude, and skill goals of the EM Talk?
Prompts in the Questionnaire

1. What changes will you make to how you identify patients and/or family members who may be ready to discuss goals of care and/or palliative care options?

2. What changes will you make to how you counsel patients and/or family about end of life care?

3. What steps will you take to ensure that you involve all members of the ED care team to ensure a multi-disciplinary and team-based approach is used?

4. In the space below, please reflect on your personal experience at this educational intervention.
Definition

- **Knowledge:** Improved comprehension, understanding, or command of end-of-life care practice
- **Attitude:** A positive feeling or disposition towards end-of-life care practices
- **Skills:** Improved expertise or ability to engage in the practice of end-of-life care
Inclusions and Exclusions:

• **Exclude:** Any item that refers to the course and not the individual’s knowledge, attitude, practice or skill

• **Include:** Any item that refers to the individual’s knowledge, attitude, practice or skill with or without specifics (Not otherwise specified)

• **Litmus Test:** Would a synonym for increased knowledge, attitude, practice or skill capture the phrase? Yes, Add No; Exclude
Steps for Coding

• Analysis will be limited to words and phrases
• No predefined codes – iterative process
  – Did this phrase/word explicitly or implicitly state a goal
    • Yes/No
      – What type of goal
        • xxx
• Frequency coding – not existence coding
  – Limited to one respondent
  – Identify subthemes and themes
• Distinguish between concepts:
  – Explicit >> Assign
  – Implicit >> Is it a synonym >>> Assign
  – Implicit >> Close meaning but not exact: separate
Coding Meeting Timeline

• Code Book Generation
• Coding Conference
• Code Book Application
• Coding Conference and Theme/Subtheme Generation
Data selection steps

Total number of survey respondents
N=326

Number of respondents with comments
n=302

Number of comments analyzed
N=117

Excluding blanks and “N/A”
N=24

Excluding course-related comments
n=185
Preliminary Results
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Inclusion</th>
<th>Exclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved Knowledge</td>
<td>Improved or augmented comprehension, understanding, or command of hospice and palliative care practice</td>
<td>Include any item that refers, explicitly or implicitly, to an individual’s improved knowledge in hospice and palliative care practice, with or without specific details</td>
<td>Exclude if the statement refers to the course and does not reflect on individual or group improved knowledge. For implicit meaning: Exclude “close code but not exact” and “no, code is different” after applying the synonym rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Attitude</td>
<td>A positive feeling or disposition towards hospice and palliative care practice</td>
<td>Include any item that refers, explicitly or implicitly, to an individual’s improved attitude in engaging in hospice and palliative care, with or without specifics</td>
<td>Exclude if the statement refers to the course and does not reflect on individual or group improved attitude. For implicit coding: Exclude “close code but not exact” and “no, code is different” after applying the synonym rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Practice</td>
<td>Improved day-to-day activities and expertise in engaging hospice and palliative care discussion</td>
<td>Include any item that refers, explicitly or implicitly, to an individual’s improved practice or acquisition of skills in hospice and palliative care, with or without specific details</td>
<td>Exclude if the statement refers to the course and does not reflect on individual or group improved clinical practice or skill acquisition. For implicit coding: Exclude “close code but not exact” and “no, code is different” after applying the synonym rule</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Synonym rule: For items that have implicit meanings, a synonym of the anchor word or phrase is applied and the sentence is reassessed and categorized as either “yes, code is exact”, “no, code is different”, or “close code but not exact”.

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Themes and Subthemes

**Improved Knowledge (N=60)**
- Acquired general useful knowledge
- Acquired tips and tricks of hospice and palliative care discussion
- Acquired verbal communication skills
- Acquired empathy skills

**Improved Attitude (N=46)**
- Attitude towards engaging in hospice and palliative care discussions
- Attitude towards improving communication skills
- Attitude towards improving patient care
- Attitude towards receiving training in hospice and palliative care
- Attitude towards practice change

**Improved Practice (N=25)**
- Commitment to using acquired skills in clinical practice
- Already utilizing acquired skills in clinical practice
## Improved Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Code label</th>
<th>Meaning Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved Knowledge</td>
<td>Acquired useful general knowledge</td>
<td>Good learning experience</td>
<td>“This was a pretty good learning experience for me”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquired knowledge of hospice and palliative care skills</td>
<td>“Learned new skills/tools”</td>
<td>“I learned some really valuable tools”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquired verbal communication skills</td>
<td>Acquired talking techniques in framing discussions</td>
<td>“Learned some techniques to talk to the family of palliative patients”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquired empathy skills</td>
<td>Acquired empathetic skills</td>
<td>“...Learned a lot about empathetic skills that I can use in daily practice”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Learned to be comfortable with silence and allowing patients and family time to reflect.”

“Great educational activity that allowed plenty of time to practice skills in a safe and helpful environment. Learned a lot about empathetic skills that I can use in daily practice, and also helped me to be more aware of when goals of care discussion might be needed.”
### Improved Attitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Code label</th>
<th>Meaning Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude towards engaging in hospice and palliative care discussions</td>
<td>Comfortable and at ease</td>
<td>“...helped me become more comfortable and at ease with end-of-life conversations”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude towards improving communication skills</td>
<td>Slow down and listen</td>
<td>“...a good reminder to slow down and listen to your patients and family members”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude towards improving patient care</td>
<td>I see the value</td>
<td>“I see the value it brings to patients and their families”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude towards receiving training in hospice and palliative care</td>
<td>Extremely applicable</td>
<td>“…it is extremely applicable to our practice. I would recommend all EM doctors undergo training such as this”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude towards practice change</td>
<td>I identified areas I can improve</td>
<td>“I identified various areas in which I can improve...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Allowed time for some introspection and was a good reminder to slow down and listen to your patients and family members.”
**Improved Practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Code label</th>
<th>Meaning Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved Practice</td>
<td>Commitment to using acquired skills in clinical practice</td>
<td>I will incorporate skills into practice</td>
<td>“I look forward to incorporating this style of talking about goals of care with my patients and families”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Practice</td>
<td>Already utilizing acquired skills in clinical practice</td>
<td>I already used learned skill</td>
<td>“The very next day I had a patient/family interaction that I was able to identify and navigate because of the training...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“It helped me realize how much I did not previously know about how to approach these conversations and gave me a great platform/roadmap to work off of for future conversations to have with my patients and their family members.”
Next steps for EM talk

• Data interpretation and Conclusion

• Working with co-authors to write a manuscript describing the findings
  – Continue to be engaged as a co-author in the writing process
Emergency Medicine Palliative Care Access (EMPallIA)
Design

- Patient Centered Research Institute (PCORI) funded grant
- Pragmatic, two-arm, multi-site randomized controlled trial
- Goal: Recruit 1,350, 50+ years with diagnosis of advanced stage cancer or end-stage organ failure
- Recruited during an ED visit and randomized into one of two arms: nurse-led telephonic case management and specialty, outpatient palliative care.

- **Primary Hypothesis:** Patients randomized to nurse-led telephonic case management will have greater improvements in quality of life and lower healthcare utilization, loneliness and social isolation, and symptom burden than those referred to outpatient specialty palliative care.
Additional Projects

**EMPallA Study Advisory Committee (SAC) Manuscript**

- Using patient involvement to drive study design and implement change
- Objective: Evaluate the breadth and scope of recommendations and modifications proposed to the research team by a patient-driven Study Advisory Committee (SAC) in an ongoing multi-site palliative care randomized control clinical trial.
- Why is this important? Enhances research quality and relevance, improves enrolled patients’ experience, and decreases study withdrawals. It is also a viable method in addressing ethical concerns.
- SAC members consist of 18 members representing 3 major stakeholder categories:
  - Patients experiencing life-limiting disease or their caregivers (n=7)
  - Staff and faculty from healthcare organizations involved with study-related illnesses (n=5)
  - Payer stakeholders (n=6).
- My role: Rewriting results and discussion section of manuscript.
Additional Projects

**EMPallA Outpatient Manuscript**

- Telehealth vs. In-person Outpatient Visits
  Objective: Does telehealth improve symptoms/QOL more than outpatient?

- Geographic Barriers to In-person Care
  Objective: Identifying geographic factors that affect outcomes

- My role: Content analysis and assisting in manuscript writing
Reflections

• What did you learn about your own research process and style?
• What expertise have you gained as a researcher?
• What do you still need to learn?
• What would you change about your process if you had another chance?
Acknowledgements

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