

ARTICOLE ORIGINALE

Getting started in palliative care - course for general practitioners in Mureș county

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Abstract

The need for palliative care is increasing, especially in rural areas where relatively more old people live. In such rural areas, the General Practitioner (GP) is the main actor to deliver palliative care. Therefore, we developed a post-graduate course in palliative care for GPs.

In this article we report about the content of the course, the attendance by GPs and the changes in their knowledge about palliative care. Twenty GPs and some other medical specialists participated in the course, which had 4 modules. After attending the modules a statistically significant improvement in the level of knowledge in the field of palliative care has been achieved for the 20 GPs from Mureș county.

The outcomes demonstrate the importance of such post-graduate programs to improve the knowledge of GPs in specific fields. In this case, it also may contribute to improve the quality of palliative care in Mureș county.

Keywords: general practitioner, post-graduate course, palliative care

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Noțiuni de bază în îngrijirea paliativă - curs pentru medicii de familie din județul Mureș

Rezumat

Nevoia de îngrijire paliativă este în creștere, în special în zonele rurale unde trăiesc relativ mai mulți bătrâni. În astfel de zone rurale, medicul generalist este principalul actor care acordă îngrijiri paliative. Prin urmare, am dezvoltat un curs postuniversitar de îngrijire paliativă pentru medicii generaliști

În acest articol, raportăm despre conținutul cursului, participarea medicilor generaliști și schimbările în cunoștințele lor despre îngrijirea paliativă. Au participat douăzeci de medici generaliști și alți specialiști în medicină, care au urmat 4 module de instruire. După participarea la curs a fost obținută o îmbunătățire statistic semnificativă a nivelului de cunoștințe în domeniul îngrijirilor paliative pentru cei 20 de medici din județul Mureș.

Rezultatele demonstrează importanța unor astfel de programe postuniversitare de îmbunătățire a cunoștințelor medicilor generaliști în domenii specifice. În acest caz, poate contribui și la îmbunătățirea calității asistenței paliative în județul Mureș.

Cuvinte cheie: medic generalist, curs postuniversitar, îngrijire paliativă

Introduction

The aging of the population leads to an increase in the number of patients requiring palliative care. Palliative care may be delivered by general practitioners (GPs), to which most of the population has access, together with nurses and family members for patients without complex needs. In Mureș County, which has a majority of rural population, GPs are the main resource for providing palliative care. However, most GPs did not receive a palliative care training in their curriculum prior to graduating from the university. This lack of knowledge and experience in palliative care leads to the need of medical postgraduate education in this field for GPs in Mureș County. Therefore, we started a project in postgraduate training in palliative care, i.e. basic notions needed in GPs' practices, in Nova-Vita Hospital in Mureș County.

In this article, we describe the content of the course and the experiences of the participants.

Palliative course and participants

We planned 4 modules in 12 months (November 2017 – November 2018) and expected between 20-25 participants to attend in each course. The content of the course and accreditation was developed in collaboration with the following consultants: Horațiu Moldovan, College physicians' secretary, Mureș county; Cernea Viorela, secretarial service college of physicians, Mureș county; Florentin Stoicescu-College of Physicians in Romania, Counsellor of the Professional-Scientific and Educational Department; Remus Oprea, President of the Association of General Practitioners in Mureș County.

Module 1: definition and visions about palliative care, bad news messages, communication and information to patients and family, integral evaluation of the patient.

Module 2: psychological/emotional/spiritual/social aspects, hydration and nutrition.

Module 3: pain diagnostic and classification, physiopathology, anorexia, mouth care.

Module 4: use of opioids in pain management and complications, cachexia, care in terminal phase, planning of palliative care.

Participants knowledge were evaluated through a pre and post course test, using the tests published in "Trainer's Handbook on Palliative Care" of Daniela Moșoiu (1). The structured questionnaire was administered before and after the courses, to evaluate improvements in medical doctors' knowledge (general clinical management and principles) of palliative care.

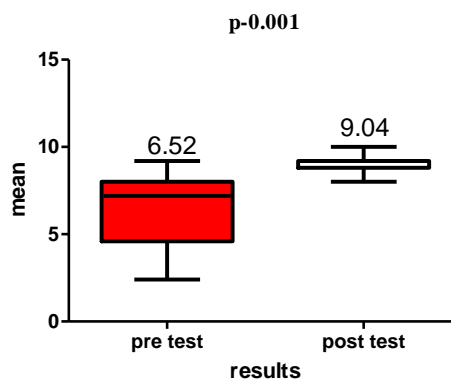
Evaluation

Twenty general practitioners from Mureș County and seven doctors with other specialities participated also in the first and second modules. We focused the evaluation on the 20 GPs, given the primary objective of the course. All 20 GPs had

completed questionnaires, there were no missing or blank questionnaires.

Following the criteria of the standardised test, a maximum score of 10 could be obtained. The pre- course test resulted in 6.52 mean, the post-course test resulted in 9.04 mean. The difference between mean is statistically significant (see figure 1).

Figure 1 - Mean pre-course test (modules 1 and 2) and post-course test (modules 1 and 2)



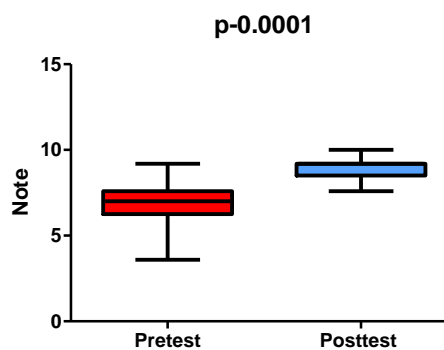
The third and fourth modules was attended by 24 doctors, of which 20 GPs from Mures county (10 of these also attended the modules 1 and 2)

We had 24 participants in modules 3 and 4; 4 doctors with other specialities, which are excluded from the evaluation) and 20 general practitioners from Mureș County; 10 of them also participated in modules 1 and 2.

All 20 GPs had completed questionnaires, there were no missing or blanks.

The mean score of the pre-courses test (modules 3 and 4) was 6.9; the mean score of the post-courses test 8,9. The difference between the means is statistically significant (see figure 2).

Figure 2 - Mean pre-course test (modules 3 and 4) and post-course test (modules 3 and 4)



Conclusion

The educational project has been framed in the estimated time and the interest of GPs to participate is satisfactory. The project was based on the work of volunteers.

After attending the modules 1 and 2 as well as the modules 3 and 4 of the postgraduate education program a statistically significant improvement in the level of knowledge in the field of palliative care has been achieved for the 20 GPs from Mures county. This may contribute to improve the palliative care in the region for those patients (and families) in need.

Conflict de interese: nu există

References

1. Moșoiu D. Trainer's Handbook on Palliative Care. Haco International Publishing House; 2010.