



'Enhancing Final-Year Medical Students'

Preparedness and Communication Skills for FY1 End of Life Care through Simulation

Dr Danielle Thornton MRCGP and Dr Alessandra Ucheoma Medical Education Fellows, CRAIGAVON AREA HOSPITAL
Dr Jayne McAuley and Dr Sarah Cousins Palliative Care Consultants SHSCT
Dr Darrell Lowry Director of Medical Education SHSCT



Aim

Our aim was to implement a simulation-based training programme designed to enhance students' communication skills and clinical preparedness to deliver end of life care.

Background

- Simulation-based learning provides a realistic and psychologically safe environment for students to practise essential skills through active participation, feedback and reflection.
- Delivering end of life care requires doctors to navigate sensitive conversations and manage complex symptoms with confidence. This can be particularly challenging for final-year medical students transitioning to Foundation Year 1 (FY1).

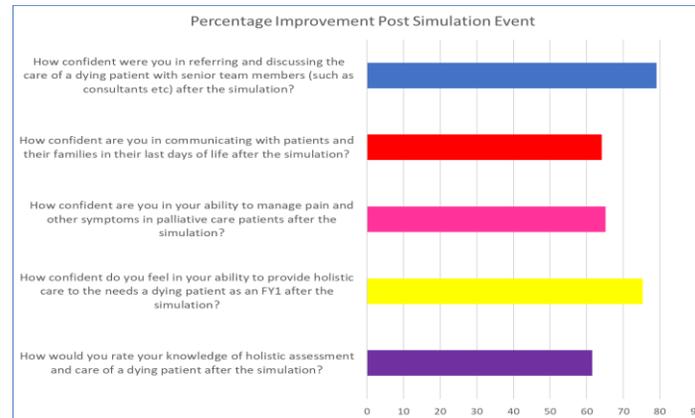
Method

- The simulation scenarios were designed and delivered by the teaching faculty and the palliative care team.
- The sessions were delivered utilising a high-fidelity manikin to create realistic clinical situations, involving breaking bad news, managing difficult conversations with patients and families, prescribing anticipatory medications, and addressing end of life care decisions.
- Students participated in role-playing activities, followed by structured debriefing sessions where they reflected on their performance and received feedback.
- Pre- and post-simulation surveys were conducted to assess changes in students' confidence and perceived preparedness in end of life care.

Results

Quantitative Feedback

Our results indicated a significant improvement in students' self-reported confidence levels; particularly with regard to managing palliative care scenarios post simulation session.

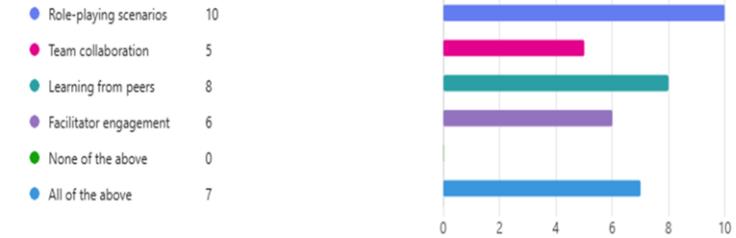


81.3% of students stated they were very likely to recommend this session to other medical students

What aspects of the simulation do you feel contributed most to your preparedness?

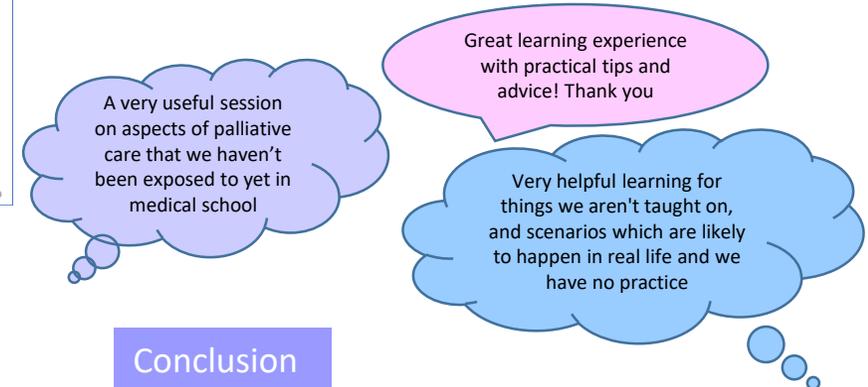


Which elements of the simulation did you find most enjoyable?



Results

Qualitative Feedback



Conclusion

- The results from this project demonstrated significant improvements in the confidence and preparedness of students in all elements of end of life care; with high rates of student satisfaction reported in addition.
- We plan to extend this course further by inviting members of the multi-disciplinary team to attend with the students. This will provide the students with an opportunity to experience inter disciplinary team working as well as further develop their skills in end of life care.