NEW GRADUATE NURSE INTRODUCTION TO PALLIATIVE & END OF LIFE CARE WORKSHOP

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KEYWORDS

New Graduate Nurse, Palliative Care, End of Life Care

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (100 words maximum).

A one-day free workshop for new nursing graduates in SWSLHD was developed to provide an introduction and overview to Palliative Care and End of Life Care Nursing as part of the MOH Palliative Care on the Job Training Initiative.

It is recognised that in all clinical settings, nurses play an essential role in the care of both patients with life limiting illnesses and those that are dying and this can be daunting and overwhelming for new graduate nurses. All nurses, regardless of setting, require core knowledge and skills to support and care for palliative care patients, dying patients and their families.

INTRODUCTION

The Program was advertised extensively through the LHD including Intranet billboard communication, two rounds of emails to all senior nursing management, NUMs and CNEs across the LHD, targeted emails to the New Grad Start CNEs, information flyers posted within many sites and targeted emails to specialist Palliative Care and End of Life Care staff at all sites across the LHD.

The workshop began with a seven-question pre-program evaluation survey, followed by some ice-breaker exercises to prepare the cohort for a day of learning and sharing of experiences. The workshop content was provided across the day by various SWSLHD Palliative Care and End of Life Care specialist nurses. The Program concluded with a seven question post-program evaluation survey and a plan for the provision of a post workshop email survey in six months' time.

YEAR CASE STUDY WAS IMPLEMENTED

2023

CASE STUDY DETAIL

Due to post-covid conditions the workshop was held in the latter third of the new graduate year. There were 41 attendees on the day of the workshop. The workshop was held in a non-clinical venue with catering provided to all attendees and presenters. The workshop was funded by NSW, MoH On the Job Training funding.

The literature indicates that new graduate nurses may experience a sense of unpreparedness in the context of providing end-of-life care. The physical, psychosocial, and spiritual needs of palliative care and dying patients and their carers also require behavioural and communication skills which new graduate nurses may not have yet developed.

The aims of the workshop were to assist new graduates in:

- their preparation and confidence in caring for palliative care patients and those patients approaching end of life in any setting, recognising that SWSLHD has a richly multi-cultural and indigenous population.
- enhancing their palliative and end of life care clinical knowledge
- exploring their role when caring for people with life limiting illness

- developing their awareness of the communication skills required when dealing with palliative and end of life care patients and their families.
- Providing knowledge of resources and support systems within SWSLHD and the broader health community.

The workshop content included:

- initial discussions with participants about their scope of practice as RNs.
- the challenges and fears that they may experience as new graduate nurses and the importance of self-awareness and self-care.
- an overview of the philosophy and definition of palliative care and end of life care.
- terminology within both palliative care and end of life care settings.
- an overview of common symptoms - assessment, and management.
- recognition of the deteriorating and or dying patient.
- escalation processes
- dying and post death care
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The workshop consisted of a mix of didactic teaching, groupwork, utilisation of audio-visual resources and discussion groups.

Overall, the data obtained through the pre and post surveys indicate the aims of the workshop were met. Whilst initially the pre-workshop survey indicated reasonable confidence by the participants in their knowledge of caring for palliative care and dying patients, following participation in the group work led by specialist Palliative Care and End of Life Care staff and the didactic teaching, there was clear anecdotal feedback that perhaps they weren't as confident as they had perceived themselves to be but there was an increase in participants self-rating in all areas surveyed post workshop.

The ability to break out into small groups gave participants exposure to specialist palliative care nurses from across the LHD and appeared to provide a safe space where new graduate nurses could discuss their experience thus far in a supported environment.

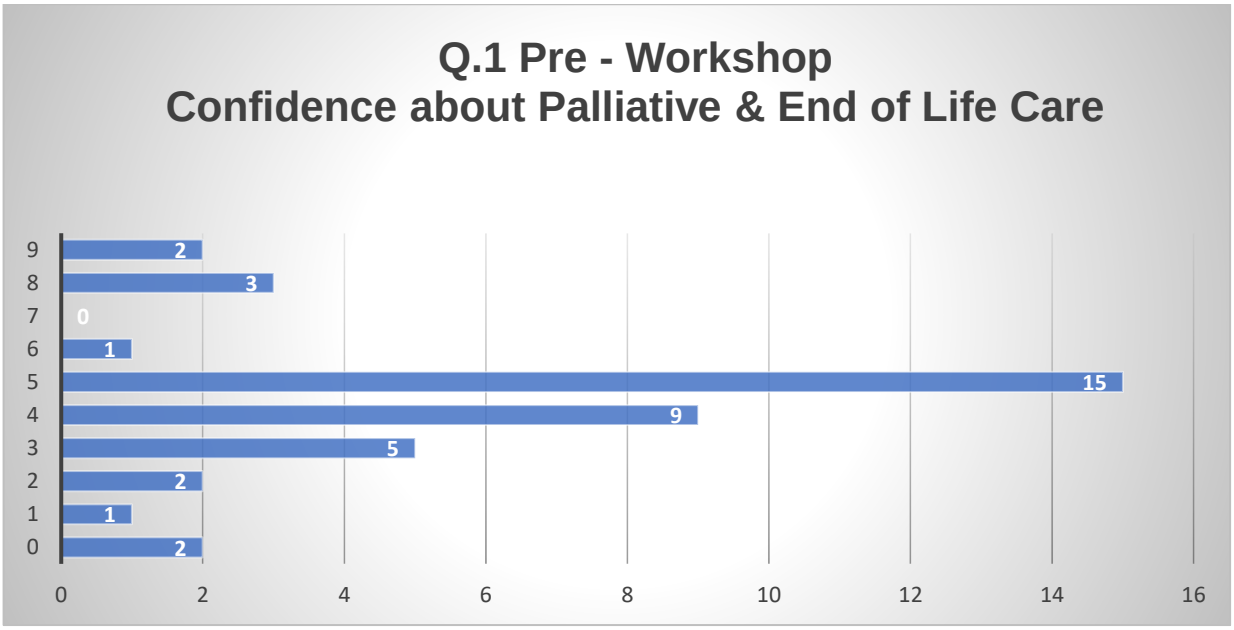
In the future, if further workshops were held there may be some further learnings to be gained by modifying pre and post surveys. This would include surveying the participants previous caring or nursing roles, demographics e.g. age, cultural background, university at which participants gained their nursing degree.

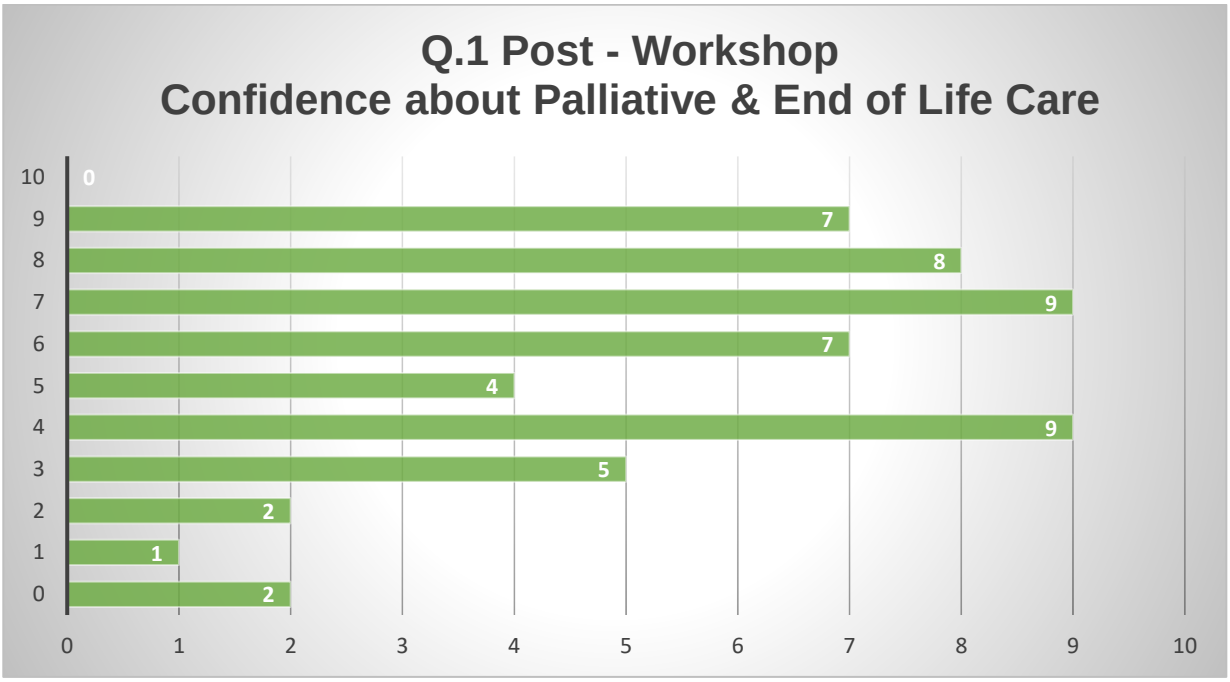
Feedback received in free text evauluations will be considered for the next workshop.

New graduate nurses will most probably be involved in the care of a dying patient regardless of work site within their first year of practice and this defnitely supports the need for this type of workshop.

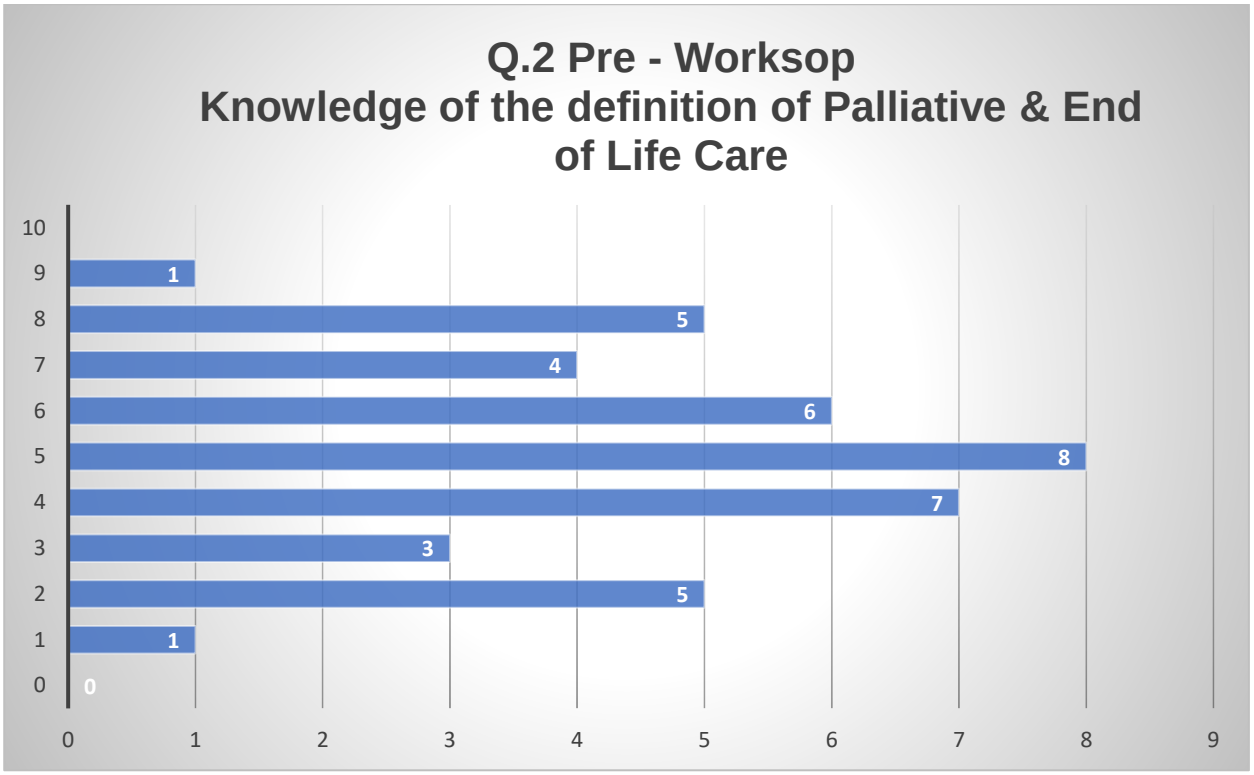
Introducing palliative care concepts to new graduate nurses in their first year of practice sets the foundations for their knowledge base to develop as we continue to face an increase in chronic disease burden in Australia.

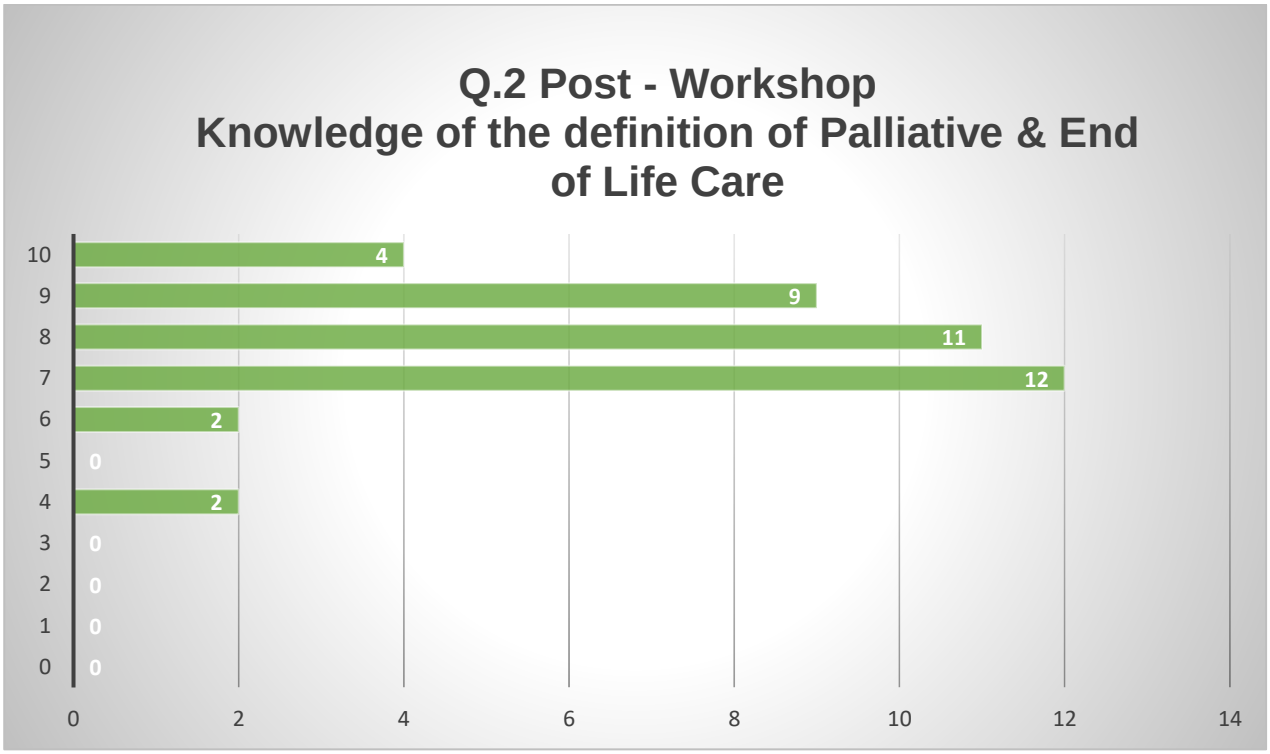
With the support of the LHD Nursing Executive the plan is to replicate this workshop annually.



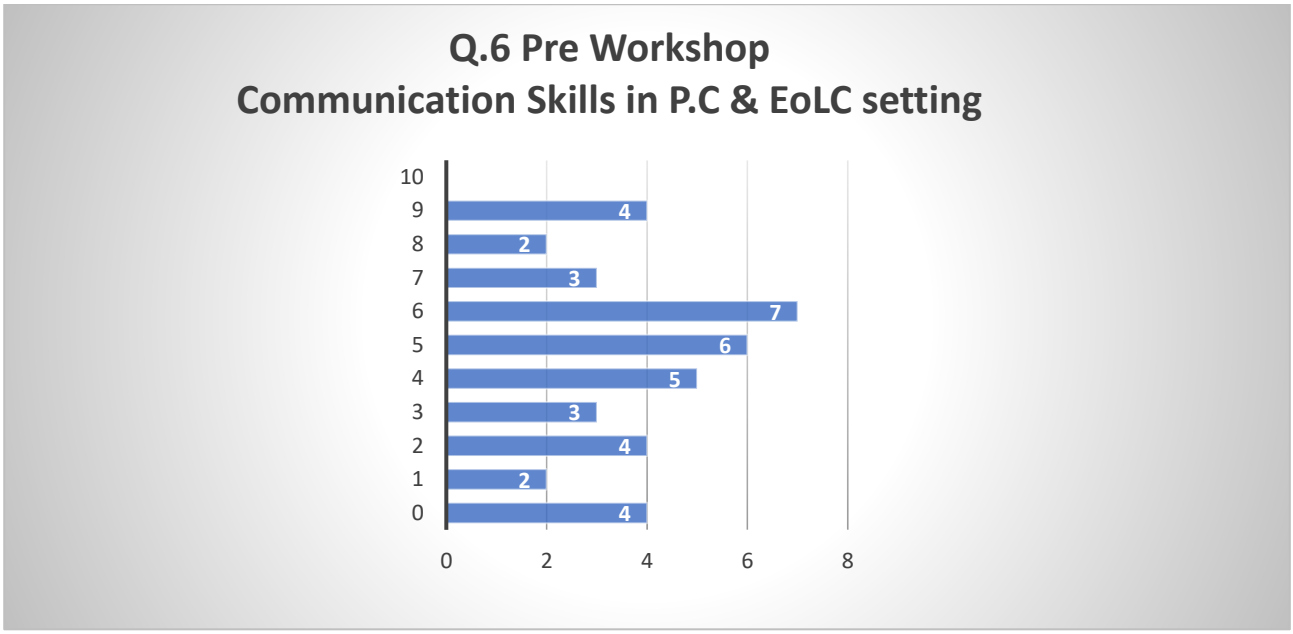


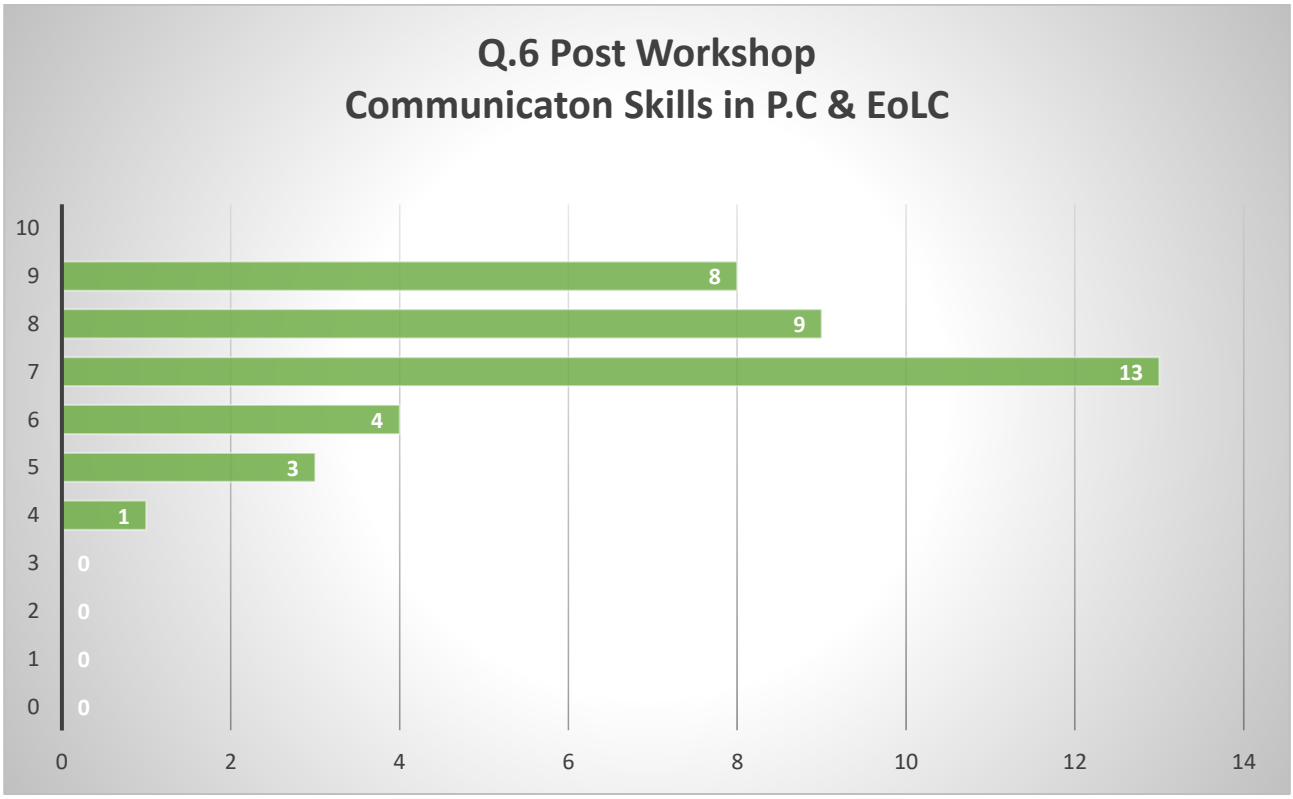
Participant's confidence level clearly increased post workshop although there is still over 50% of participants that rate their confidence as 5/10 or less.





Only 5% of participants post workshop rate their knowledge of the definition of palliative care as less than 6/10





Communication skills within the context of palliative and end of life care is very important and requires support and education for novice nurses to become confident communicating in this space. Interestingly, 56% of participants rated their communication skills at 6/10 or above. Post workshop 87% rated their communication skills as 6/10 or higher.