

The impact of a hybrid online and classroom-based course on palliative care competencies of family medicine residents

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Abstract:	<p>The University of Calgary offers a palliative care course that involves both classroom- and web-based learning for rural-based family medicine residents. This study assessed the impact of the course on palliative care-related competencies for two classes: 2004 and 2005. Instruments were developed to evaluate pre- versus post-course changes in knowledge (15-item quiz), attitudes (12-item survey), self-perceived comfort levels (19-item survey) and skills (3 long Objective Structured Clinical Examination stations (OSCEs), with accompanying standardised score sheets). In all, 16 and 20 residents participated in the 2004 and 2005 classes, respectively. Internal reliability values were acceptable to very good (Knowledge Quiz, Kuder-Richardson 20 = 0.5; Attitude Scale, alpha = 0.68-0.78; OSCE score sheets, alpha = 0.63-0.89; Self-Perceived Comfort Survey, alpha = 0.89-0.92). Inter-rater reliability values of the OSCE score sheets were alpha = 0.87 to 0.92. There was a significant improvement in the pre- versus post-course performances in OSCE 2 for 2004 and 2005 (P = 0.01; P = 0.01; d = 1.42 and 1.94, respectively). Despite statistically insignificant changes in the other OSCEs, acceptable to large effect sizes were noted (d = 0.4-1.34) for OSCE 1 in 2004 and OSCEs 3 in 2004 and 2005. Knowledge improved significantly pre-versus post-course in 2004 and 2005 (t = 4.44 and 8.99; d = 2.29 and 2.24, respectively). Significant improvements and large effect sizes were noted in the comfort scales, but a ceiling effect was noted in the communication subscale. This hybrid course resulted in significant improvements across four domains, knowledge, attitudes, self-perceived comfort scale, and skills, in 2 consecutive classes.</p>
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