

Impact of Formal Communication Education on Nursing Comfort in Discussing Difficult Topics

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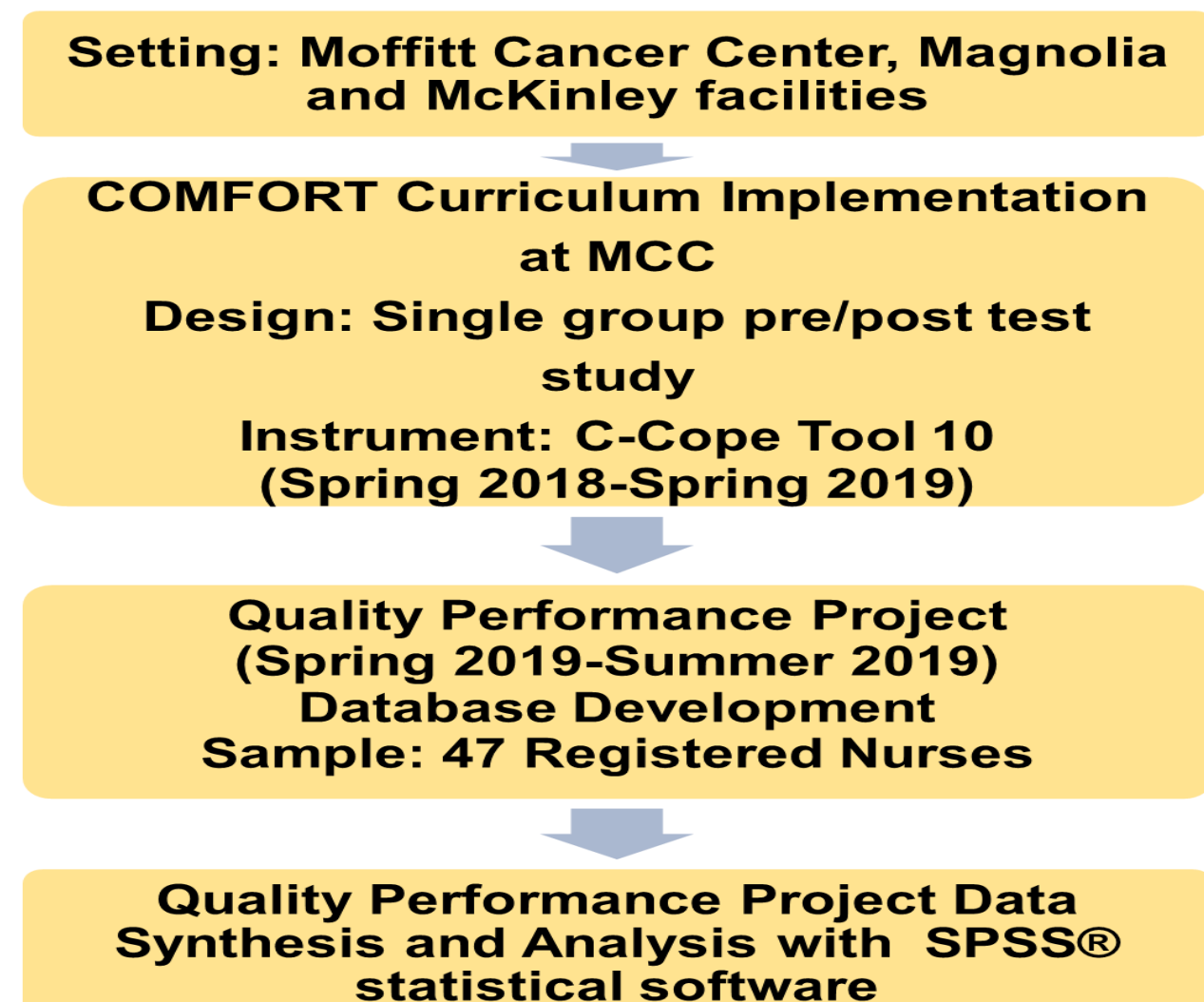
Purpose

•The purpose of this project was to evaluate the impact that a formal education program (COMFORT) had on improving the comfort of nurses with engaging patients and families with difficult topics.

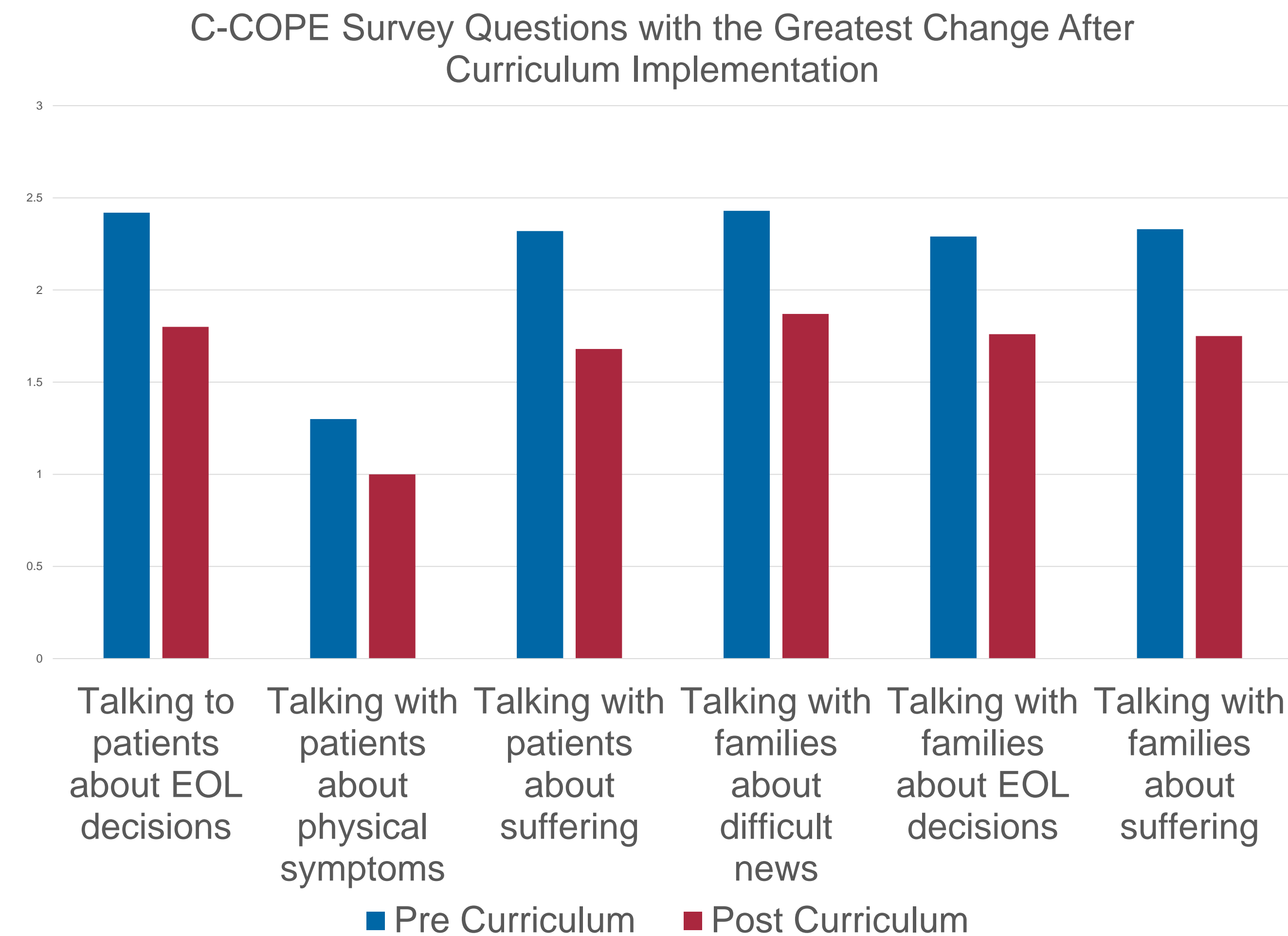
Background

- ▶ Formal communication training is effective in improving the ability of nurses to impact the quality of life of oncology patients, patient satisfaction and treatment adherence.
- ▶ Even within National Cancer Institute (NCI) designated cancer centers, only 64% of facilities support the development of competency in communication practices.
- ▶ Formal communication education positively impacts both the comfort of nurses with difficult topics, as well as the likelihood that these topics will be discussed at all.
- ▶ The COMFORT Curriculum, an oncology specific communication curriculum, meets the National Consensus Project for Quality Palliative Care (NCP) criteria, and is applicable to real-word scenarios.

Methods



Results



The C-COPE utilizes a Likert scale where the lowest score indicates the greatest comfort with difficult topics. The graph demonstrates a clinical improvement in all cohorts.

COMFORT is an acronym that stands for the 7 basic skills of health communication



Discussion

- ▶ Results demonstrate improvement in communication comfort following the educational intervention.
- ▶ Offering the educational intervention for a longer period of time is necessary to measure the impact on nurses, patients and families communication about difficult topics.

Limitations

- ▶ The C-COPE tools were not matched for identification between pre/post survey, limiting the ability to track the progress of individual participants across the curriculum.
- ▶ Small sample size limits interpretation of results.
- ▶ Participation was limited to Registered Nurses at one project site.

Clinical Implications

- ▶ The COMFORT curriculum has the potential to improve the comfort level of families, nurses, and patients with engaging in the discussion of difficult topics.

References

Available as a handout

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