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Poster Title

Evaluating a Communication Skills Workshop Series for Yale Multispecialty Clinical Fellows

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Abstract

Background: Internal Medicine Subspecialty fellows must reach specific milestones of communication skills proficiency to complete training, move on to independent practice, and achieve high-quality patient care. Yet many fellows have not had formalized opportunities to develop these skills. We asked whether a workshop series could improve communication knowledge and self-reported skill level for these fellows.

Methods: We created 3 sequential workshops for first year fellows from oncology/hematology, geriatrics, pulmonary, critical care and sleep, and hospice and palliative medicine. Facilitating faculty represent the participating subspecialties. Each workshop is 4 hours. The first hour includes reflection on current communication challenges and skill building progress and didactics followed by 2.5 hours for small group role play or simulated patient (SP) scenarios. The final half hour focuses on reflection with personal action plans and large group debriefing with take home points. Workshop #1 (month 1) used role play to focus on relationship building and breaking bad news, Workshop #2 (month 7) used SPs to focus on discussing prognosis and negotiating goals of care, and Workshop #3 (month 11) will use SPs to focus on resuscitation status conversations. Pre/post surveys are administered to participants for each workshop.

Results: Workshop #1 included 19 first-year fellows. The majority were female (58%) and PGY-4 level (89%). Sixty-eight percent reported prior communication training. Participants' goals centered around breaking bad news. They reported Workshop #1 helped them identify areas to improve, become comfortable with silence and practice useful phrases like "I wish". Additional data from Workshop #2, including knowledge and self-reported skill level, will be analyzed for poster.

Conclusions: An interactive, multispecialty fellows' communication skills workshop is feasible. The workshops may improve knowledge and self-reported skill level. Participants were able to identify areas for focused improvement.