A NATIONAL SURVEY OF KOREAN MEDICAL STUDENTS FOR END OF LIFE CARE EDUCATION

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Introduction & Objectives

- End of life (EoL) care is an important issue and adequate education and training in medical education is a key factor in care and management of terminally ill patients.
- This study aimed to evaluate the current status of acquisition of knowledge, experience and self-perceived attitudes on end of life (EoL) care at the undergraduate level in South Korea.

Method

- An anonymous survey was designed involving fourth-year medical students of all 41 Korean medical schools in the year 2016.
- The topics of classroom teaching and bedside teaching, including feedback experience during clinical clerkship related to end of life care were measured.
- Seven items for self-rated attitudes were identified towards end of life care related education and practice.

Results

- The response rate : 49.2% (1641 4th grade of medical students out of a total of 3336 applicants as per 2017 Korean Medical Board)
- A variable response for each item of the survey(range: 1,466 ~ 1,641)
- Only 14.5 % checked the presence of experience in taking patients who needed EoL care during their clerkship rotation

Table 1. Number of participants who Acquired Lecture Related to Components in EoL Care (n=1,630)

Details	n (%)
Bad news delivery	1367 (83.9)
Euthanasia	1164 (71.4)
Overview for hospice and palliative care	1022 (62.7)
Death and dying	1016 (62.3)
Symptom management (pain, nausea, dyspnea, delirium etc)	947 (58.1)
Do-not-resuscitate(DNR)	804 (49.3)
Legal issues for life sustaining treatment	709 (43.5)
Advanced care directives	601 (36.9)
Withdrawal /withholding of life sustaining treatment	509 (31.3)
Setting a treatment goal	362 (22.2)
Act on Hospice and Palliative Care and Decisions on Life-Sustaining Treatment for Patients at the EoL that will be supposed to be activated on 2018 in Korea	186 (11.4)

General characteristics of participants		N (%)
Age (years)	Median : 26 years	Range 22~44
Gender	Male/Female	998 (60.9)/ 642 (39.2)
Entry	Undergraduate/Graduate	597 (36.4)/ 1044 (63.6)
Experience of the acquaintance' death		550 (33.6)

Table 2. Number of Participants Who Had Bed-Side Experiences and Had feedback on clerkship rotation related to Components in EoL care

Details	No (%)	Bed side experiences (Total respondents =1,466)	Feedback experiences (Total respondents =1,491)
Bad news delivery		644 (43.9)	796 (53.4)
Physical symptom management		509 (34.7)	547 (36.7)
Death pronouncement		264 (18.0)	341 (22.9)
Psychosocial symptom management		221 (15.1)	247 (16.6)
Discussion of DNR		216 (14.7)	291 (19.5)
Setting a treatment goal		146 (10.0)	214 (14.4)
Achievement of advanced care directives		94 (6.4)	187 (12.5)
Withdrawal/Withholding of life sustaining treatment		133 (9.1%)	217 (14.6)

Table 3. Self-rated levels of attitudes toward EoL care and relations with number of acknowledged and clinically experienced topics of EoL care (5-point Likert scale: items scored 1= strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)

Attitudes Details		Average (SD)	No. of acknowledged classroom topics of EoL care			No. of clinically experienced topics of EoL care		
			No. of topics	Average (SD)	P value	No. of topics	Average (SD)	P value
I. Are you satisfied to EoL care curriculum?		3.09 (0.85)	≤5	2.90 (0.83)	<.0001	≤1	2.98 (0.81)	<.0001
			>5	3.32 (0.82)		>1	3.25 (0.87)	
II. Did you get enough EoL care education on clerkship rotation?		2.75 (0.93)	≤5	2.57 (0.87)	<.0001	≤1	2.60 (0.87)	<.0001
			>5	2.97 (0.94)		>1	2.94 (0.95)	
III. Did you chance to observe the issues related to EoL care on clerkship rotation?		2.62 (0.96)	≤5	2.54 (0.91)	0.0001	≤1	2.38 (0.88)	<.0001
			>5	2.72 (1.00)		>1	2.97 (0.95)	
IV. Do you want to participate more to EoL care related education or clinical practice?		3.60 (0.78)	≤5	3.57 (0.79)	0.065	≤1	3.52 (0.77)	<.0001
			>5	3.64 (0.75)		>1	3.70 (0.76)	
V. Do you think physician should provide good practice related to EoL care?		4.02 (0.76)	≤5	3.96 (0.79)	0.001	≤1	3.93 (0.76)	<.0001
			>5	4.09 (0.73)		>1	4.16 (0.74)	
VI. Do you think you should learn to be able to practice patients for whom is needed to EoL care?		4.02 (0.74)	≤5	3.98 (0.78)	0.023	≤1	3.93 (0.76)	<.0001
			>5	4.07 (0.70)		>1	4.15 (0.71)	
VII. Are you ready to practice to EoL care needed patients?		2.75 (0.96)	≤5	2.73 (0.98)	0.406	≤1	2.67 (0.95)	0.001
			>5	2.77 (0.95)		>1	2.85 (0.96)

Fig 1. Self-rated levels of attitudes toward EoL care and relations with number of clinically experienced topics of EoL care

Conclusions

The education for EoL care for medical students in Korea is exceptionally inadequate despite growing remarkable demand. This result let us know an unmet need for EoL care practice and medical schools have to develop the suitable EoL care curriculum on the routine medical education thoroughly.