

Palliative Care & Clinical Trials and Pharmacovigilance

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Learning palliative care by means of simulation

The study is part of an ESF-funded research and development project, whose purpose was to use simulation to support social and healthcare staff's competence development in small and medium-sized enterprises. The project partners were a vocational education institution and a university of applied sciences. The participants represented 20 SMEs engaged in old people's care, child welfare, mental health and disability services. Based on a learning needs assessment, they were offered simulation-based coaching in their own contexts.


The staff in enterprises offering care for old people (n=5) participated in simulation coaching designed to influence their attitudes and theoretical and practical palliative care competence. The aims were to help staff recognise clients' physical, psychological and social palliative care needs, increase staff's sensitivity and preparedness for holistic care and practise interaction supporting family members. One Lecturer assumed the role of a dying person/family member, while another facilitated the simulation process and feedback discussion. The participants, 6-10 employees per enterprise, were divided to actors working in pairs and observers instructed to focus on certain areas of the performance. Following the intervention, the participants were asked to

evaluate the usefulness of the coaching for their competence development and the suitability of simulation for learning palliative care. Their responses to the 5 Likert-type items and 3 open questions were analysed using SPSS for Windows 25 and inductive content analysis. Simulation coaching was found to be well suited for learning palliative care; it allows experiencing near-authentic scenarios in a safe and confidential atmosphere and encourages deep reflection. Profound discussion, built on the near-genuine scenario and shared action and interaction, was appreciated as the most important yield of the coaching. Participants had an opportunity to discuss challenging care situation, ethics and coping in a safe environment. Simulation-based coaching could be considered a form of clinical supervision.

Speaker Biography

Mari Salminen-Tuomaala, completed her PhD in Health Sciences. Currently she is a Principal Lecturer in Nursing and Advanced Practice Nursing, the Responsible Lecturer for the Master Programme in Advanced Practice Nursing and a Senior Lecturer in Acute Nursing at Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences, School of Health Care and Social Work. She is also the Responsible Lecturer for the national R & D Coaching Programme. She has authored or co-authored 68 scientific articles and has been a key note speaker and presenter in several national and international conferences.

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