Penn Primary Palliative Care Champions
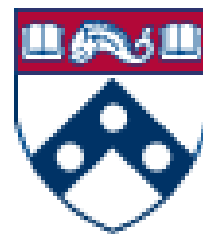
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- Mixed Methods Research Lab
- Department of Family Medicine and Community Health
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Qualitative research and the MMRL?

- *Qualitative research is the scientific analysis of participants while gaging variables for the purpose of garnering empirical data, for the sake of forming and producing evidence, that manifests results/outcomes, and overall findings/conclusions.*

  - *What it is:*

    - *Research that allows us to look at the perspectives of key stakeholders in health equity issues. This includes including patients, doctors, and healthcare administrators, among others.*

    - *Helps us to identify key concerns or issues in the development and implementation of equitable healthcare strategies.*

    - *Allows us to generate potential solutions that center the needs and priorities of those most impacted by the issue.*

  - *How it works:*

    - *The MMRL typically collects data through semi-structured interviews or focus groups.*

    - *Data analysis allows the MMRL to identify themes in the data, through coding transcripts of interviews.*

    - *"Coding" is the process of organizing MMRL data into nodes, or thematic categories based on existing research or emerging findings.*

    - *The MMRL typically uses NVivo qualitative software to code qualitative data.*

Project Overview

Palliative Care, or Palliative Medicine, is specialized medical care focused on providing relief from the symptoms, pain and stress of a serious illness such as lung cancer. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family. **- Center to Advance Palliative Care (CAPC)**

The purpose of the study is to conduct a survey- and interview-based evaluation of the training program to assess 1) acceptability and effectiveness of program components and 2) to understand the impact of a primary palliative care educational program on participants' attitudes and practice.
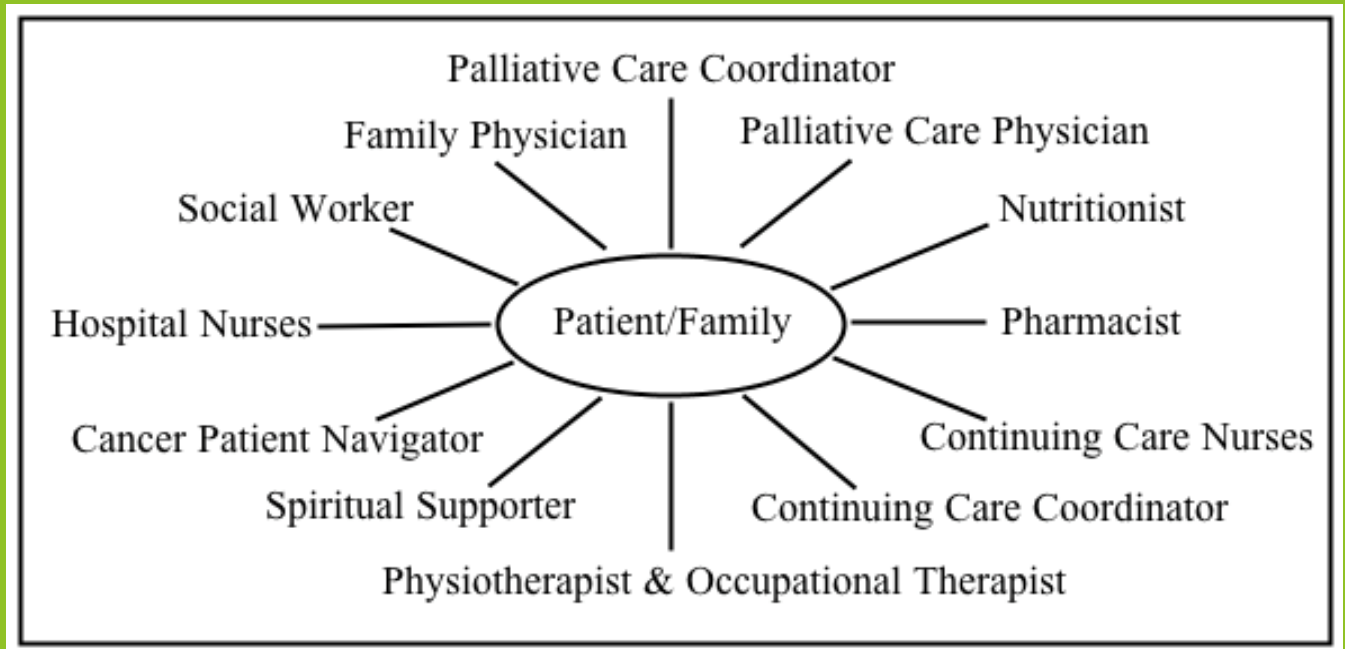
▶ Source: UCHealth.org

Source: American Journal of Preventive Medicine

Figure 1: Interdisciplinary team model of palliative care

Palliative Care Coordinator

Family Physician   Palliative Care Physician

Social Worker   Nutritionist

Hospital Nurses —— Patient/Family —— Pharmacist

Cancer Patient Navigator   Continuing Care Nurses

Spiritual Supporter   Continuing Care Coordinator

Physiotherapist & Occupational Therapist

Source: Research Gate   Figure 2

Significance

There remains a critical need to collect data that will aid in identification of best practices for providing longitudinal palliative care education to motivated clinicians, both within the Penn Medicine system and on a broader scale.

In a 2020 Yale study entitled, "Consider Palliative Care: A Decision Aid to Improve Palliative Care Knowledge" the researchers stated that "There is a critical need to improve patient and informal caregiver PC education, as patients and informal caregivers continue to misunderstand and subsequently not use its service."

Aims

Aim 1: to quantitatively assess the acceptability and effectiveness of a novel primary palliative care champion training program with respect to

a) synchronous/didactic learning,

b) asynchronous/self-directed learning, and

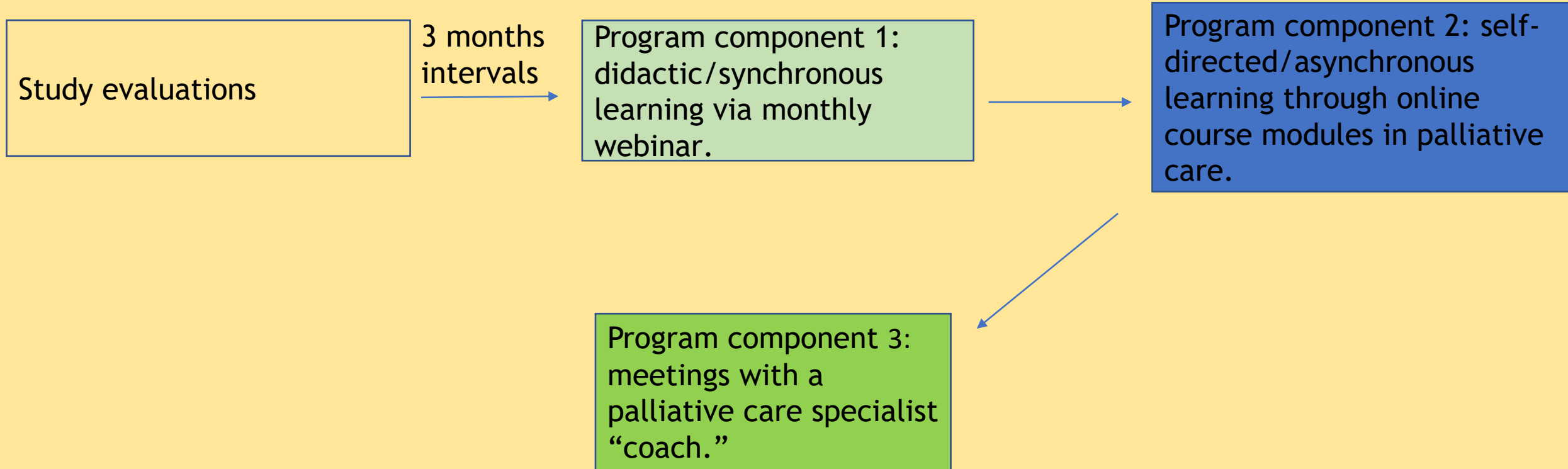c) longitudinal coaching by palliative care specialists.

Aim 2: to characterize and understand the impact of a novel primary palliative care champion program on participant attitudes and practice using qualitative semi-structured interviews.

Study Participants

▶ The participants are from various settings across Penn Medicine. There are 15 Penn Palliative Care Champions, and investigators attempting to recruit a 100% of the participants to provide feedback.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:	
Inclusion	Exclusion
Active participants completed 50% of required synchronous and asynchronous learning activities	Active participants have not completed 50% of the required synchronous and asynchronous learning activities
The ability to read and respond to questions in English	Participants have cognitive or psychiatric disorders
≥ 18 years of age	

Study Design

Study evaluations

3 months intervals →

Program component 1: didactic/synchronous learning via monthly webinar.

→ Program component 2: self-directed/asynchronous learning through online course modules in palliative care.

Program component 3: meetings with a palliative care specialist "coach."

Methods

Survey evaluations at 3 months intervals.

Semi-structured interviews with study participants at two timepoints in the program. Interviews will be de-identified, audio-recorded, transcribed, coded and analyzed to identify emergent themes. All interviews will be conducted either in a private office setting or via telephone or virtual platforms. Interview transcripts will be analyzed for emergent themes.

Findings and future work

▶ *Tentative findings at this point.*

▶ *Future work involves continuation of refining the codebook structure and reviewing relevant content that is applicable to primary NVivo project nodes in relation to prior coding.*

▶ *Further defining the structure of information that is existent within NVivo coding in terms of analysis, relationships, and overall meta-inferences.*

▶ *Hopeful that overarching findings will be in sync with thematic analysis for final report.*

▶ *The overall goal is quality improvement for the palliative care program based on the data.*

My Role in the Project

My role in this project started off by cleaning transcripts that contained personal and sensitive information.

Met with project lead to conduct close reading of several transcripts.

Developed codebook based on emerging themes in transcripts, including (lightbulb/aha moments, application, reflecting/evaluating, program structure/implementation, vital talks, barriers, pros, and recommendations).

Coded several transcripts with project lead to reach high inter-rater reliability (IRR), then was in the process of moving to independent coding of transcripts.

Supplemental Images

Figure Source: Hospicecare.com

Lessons Learned

HOW TO CLEAN TRANSCRIPTS.

LEARNING HOW TO CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW FOR RESEARCH RELATED GOALS.

LEARNING HOW TO USE NVIVO RESEARCH SOFTWARE.

DIFFERENT ASPECTS THAT INVOLVE QUALITATIVE CODING IN ORDER TO CHARACTERIZE AND UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF A NOVEL PRIMARY PALLIATIVE CARE CHAMPION PROGRAM ON PARTICIPANT ATTITUDES AND PRACTICE USING QUALITATIVE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AS A BASIS.

LEARNED THE OVERALL FUNDAMENTALS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH.

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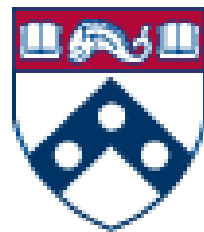https://www.istockphoto.com/search/2/image?p
hrase=palliative+care.

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