Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Nursing Practice with an emphasis in Family Nurse Practitioner

Heather E. Barger
B. S. in Nursing, May 2015, Saint Louis University

Palliative Care Services on an Adult Inpatient Oncology Unit

Date: November 17, 2022
Time: 5:30p
Place: University of Missouri- St. Louis Nursing Administration Building – Room 117

Abstract
Problem: Palliative care (PC) services are widely underutilized for patients with cancer, partly due to the shortage of PC specialists. Additionally, many Americans have not filled out advance directive (AD) paperwork which is commonly addressed in PC. In the absence of an AD, cancer patients are at risk for receiving undesired aggressive treatments in the event they are unable to make decisions independently.

Methods: This quality improvement pilot initiative utilized a descriptive observational design to evaluate the number of ADs documented in the electronic health record (EHR) on an inpatient oncology unit. A retrospective EHR review was used to collect baseline comparison data. A prospective EHR review was performed after implementation of visual aids, daily reminders, and audit tools for nurses.

Results: Chart review of 70 patients before implementation showed 21 patients (30%) had ADs documented. After implementation, chart review of 80 patients showed 33 patients (41.3%) had ADs documented. Pre-implementation, 42 patients (60%) were screened for ADs at the time of admission. The number of patients screened increased to 73 patients (91.3%) in the post-implementation group. A Chi-square test of independence between screening for AD and documentation of AD was statistically significant ($p < .001$).

Implications for Practice: Implementation of visual aids, daily reminders, and audits improved nurses’ awareness of patients without AD paperwork. The findings of this study suggest there are several approaches that could be implemented by nurses regarding PC services and the importance of ADs.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
Nancy Magnuson, DSN, APRN, PCNS, FNP-BC - Chairperson
Vanessa Loyd, DNP, PhD, RN
Linda Cornejo, BSN, RN, MBA