FROM DIAGNOSIS TO DEATH — A PILOT OF INTER-PROFESSIONAL PALLIATIVE CARE SIMULATION FOR MEDICAL AND NURSING STUDENTS

**Background**
Effective palliative care is delivered in the multidisciplinary team (MDT) setting. Despite this the majority of under graduate/prerogistration teaching takes place in a unidisciplinary environment.

In the 2015–2016 Academic year Swindon Academy and Oxford Brookes Nursing school sought to address this issue through a pilot program of MDT high-fidelity simulations focused on a patient in the last six months of life.

This project aims to improve undergraduates’ confidence in the diagnosis and management of palliative problems, as well as their understanding of each other’s roles and ability to work confidently in a team.

**Method**
44 final year Medical students and second year Nursing students undertook four scenarios that followed a patient (an actor and finally a Sim Man) from diagnosis of a terminal cancer, breaking bad news, diagnosing the dying patient and management of symptoms at the end of life.

Confidence was self-assessed pre and post session on an anonymised 10 point Likert scale. Data collected was analysed for statistical significance using the Mann-Whitney U test.

**Results**
The session was rated 8.7 overall and every category of self-confidence assessment showed an overall mean improvement. All areas of self-assessment showed statistically significant improvements in pre and post scores, including in ‘awareness of team member roles’ and ‘communicating with patients and families’.

**Conclusion**
Palliative care in a simulated environment appears to be an effective teaching tool. Inter-professional teaching seems to improve awareness of professionals’ roles, thereby improving the care provided by teams of new junior doctors and nurses.

An observational study is now underway on whole-day simulation workshops which we hope will further support our argument that inter-professional simulation teaching can effectively deliver palliative care education and improved ability to work in a MDT.

**REFERENCE**