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SHORT COMMUNICATION:

## **EVALUATION OF A HYBRID DEMENTIA CARE SKILLS WORKSHOP IN MALDIVES AND BRUNEI**

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### ABSTRACT:

Dementia is a global public health priority. In Brunei, Geriatric Medicine provides dementia teaching sessions to undergraduate health science students at Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD). It was found that more knowledge of dementia management was needed. Thus, a dementia care skills workshop was provided. Content from a dementia care skills workshop for care workers was given in a hybrid format. UBD nursing students attended in person, while participants from Maldives joined online via zoom. Feedback on the workshop was obtained via an online form at the end of the session. There were 27 undergraduate medical students from UBD and 43 participants from Maldives, with representation from hospitals and health centres, government ministries and non-government organisations. Feedback was positive in terms of satisfaction with format and structure, content relevance and effectiveness of learning experience. Participants felt that future sessions on effective communication and how to manage caregiver burden would be useful. The dementia care skills workshop held in a hybrid format was well-received. Further sessions to improve the knowledge and understanding of dementia care skills are warranted.

**Keywords:** Brunei, Caregiver Burden, Dementia, Education, Maldives

### INTRODUCTION:

Dementia is a global public health priority with significant health and social implications, not just for the person with dementia but also their families and societies. Dementia is the major cause of disability in older people and is a concern in Brunei, given the rapidly ageing population and high rate of non-communicable diseases in the country [1]. Thus, there is much

national effort to raise public awareness about dementia, especially the warning signs or symptoms of the disease and risk reduction measures. During the pandemic, the use of social media and online presentations were utilised to promote dementia awareness [2].

In Brunei, the Geriatric Medicine specialty provides teaching sessions on dementia to

undergraduate health sciences students at Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD). A survey done in 2022 showed that the majority of these students had good awareness about dementia. However, more knowledge on management approaches for dementia was needed, including psychosocial interventions [3]. Thus, an additional session on dementia care skills was provided in 2023. This paper describes the feedback from participants regarding the dementia care skills workshop delivered through a hybrid approach, with suggestions for future teaching sessions on dementia care.

#### **METHODS:**

A Dementia Care Skills (DCS) Workshop Train the Trainers session was held in Brunei in 2017, with subsequent workshops provided by the trainers to various audiences [4]. The actual DCS workshop for care workers was 18 hours and consists of six modules. The modules are nature of dementia, impact of dementia / person-centered care, effective communication, behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD), purposeful and meaningful engagement, and application to care practices. Given the limited slots available to fit this additional session into the undergraduate students' timetable, the workshop content was compressed into 2.5 hours, focusing on

highlighting the key clinical aspects of dementia, care management and support.

At that time, the local dementia association (Demensia Brunei) was also collaborating with the Alzheimer's Society of Maldives (ASM) on improving dementia awareness in their respective countries. It was decided to share this workshop session online, which the Maldives attendees would join via zoom. Thus, the actual workshop took place on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023; 2:00 to 4:30pm, where undergraduate nursing students attended physically in a seminar room in UBD, while participants selected by ASM joined virtually through Zoom. An online link and QR code were provided to all participants to complete a feedback form at the end of the session.

#### **RESULTS:**

There were 27 undergraduate medical students from UBD and 43 participants from Maldives. From the Maldives, there were 23 (53.5%) from hospitals and health centres, 11 (25.6%) from government ministries (Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services as well as Ministry of Health) and 9 (20.9%) from non-government non-profit organisations related to aged care, dementia and nursing. Table 1 summarises the responses from participants based on the feedback form given to attendees.

Table 1: Feedback responses from participants regarding the DCS workshop

	Score	UBD (n=27)	ASM (n=43)
<b>Satisfaction with format and structure</b>	1 (Poor)	0	0
	2	1 (3.7%)	0
	3	6 (22.2%)	1 (2.3%)
	4	11 (40.7%)	15 (34.9%)
	5 (Excellent)	9 (33.3%)	27 (62.8%)
<b>Relevance of content for your needs</b>	1 (Poor)	0	0
	2	0	0
	3	4 (14.8%)	2 (4.7%)
	4	9 (33.3%)	16 (37.2%)
	5 (Excellent)	14 (51.9%)	25 (58.1%)
<b>Effectiveness of learning experience</b>	1 (Poor)	0	0
	2	0	0
	3	8 (29.6%)	1 (2.3%)
	4	12 (44.4%)	20 (46.5%)
	5 (Excellent)	7 (25.9%)	22 (51.2%)

There were two main areas the participants felt needed more time or that future sessions would be beneficial: how to effectively communicate with people with dementia and how to cope as a caregiver in terms of mental health and stress management.

Some of the additional comments provided by the participants were as follows:

'Very informative session. Learnt a lot and good reflections from past scenarios.'

'It was very comprehensive, compact and the topics were well-covered.'

'It was very detailed and the way the teacher used his personal experience is wonderful.'

'An eye opener with knowledge through life experiences.'

'More interactive sessions. Would like to do some activities regarding the information provided.'

#### DISCUSSION:

The dementia care skills workshop was held in a hybrid format, with attendees from two organisations. Based on the feedback given, the session was viewed positively by the participants. There were several strengths to this teaching approach. The online format enabled attendees from other localities to join, removing the barrier of travel time and distance. It was possible to share knowledge and expertise across two different settings and provide the educational session to a larger number of people. Such collaborative working is essential for coming up with creative ideas on

how to solve issues with significant community impact such as dementia.

It was quite ambitious to compress a lot of content into the one session. While this workshop served its purpose in providing an overview and introduction to dementia care skills, further detailed workshops for each of the modules may be required. Similar shorter workshops should still be planned in the future as it provides a solid foundation for understanding dementia, after which participants may register for more advanced sessions covering each module in detail.

Based on the feedback forms, the participants felt that workshops focusing on communication and caregiver coping should be prioritized. A flipped classroom approach may be applied to future sessions to consolidate learning and maximise the limited contact time. This means that participants should be given resource materials to look through beforehand, with the session utilised for interactive discussions to clarify uncertainties and apply the knowledge in group activities [5]. As the participants are relevant stakeholders in raising dementia awareness, it may also be worthwhile planning how they can apply this knowledge after the workshop, including volunteering with the local dementia association and contributing to their community [6].

## CONCLUSION:

The dementia care skills workshop held in a hybrid format was beneficial and well-received by the participants. Further educational sessions to improve the knowledge and understanding of dementia care skills are warranted.

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