

Abstract

Introduction: Nearly one quarter of all American adults have given little, if any, thought to their end-of-life wishes and even fewer have successfully captured those desires through legally acceptable forms of documentation. Yet, evidence tells us that despite the difficult content, patients actually want to have these discussions and feel empowered by them.

Objectives: This study was designed to determine if community outreach events are an adequate way of improving patient education regarding end-of-life care planning and increasing the number of POLST forms within the participant population.

Methods: A community-outreach pilot study was designed to create an opportunity for discussion about end-of-life care planning.

18-participants attended this event which showed the Netflix documentary, *Extremis*, and then provided medical document planning education. They filled out surveys before and after the event to assess their perceptions, preparedness, and satisfaction with the event. Descriptive statistics and t-tests were utilized to determine significance for the quantitative survey findings.

Results: The study found that the community event was a strongly agreeable means of offering end-of-life care planning education, that it had the potential to change perceptions regarding death discussions and increased the number of POLST forms within the participation population.

Conclusion: Outreach programs aimed at preparing individual's for serious illness proved a successful model for improving POLST form education and documentation and should be recommended to all communities.

Keywords: serious illness, POLST, physician's order for life sustaining treatment, end-of-life, advanced care planning, unforeseen illness