

A Stepped Approach to Online Training in Geriatrics: The Dementia Care Certificate Program

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1. Introduction

- The number of people with dementia in North America is expected to increase from four million people in 2010 to 11 million people in 2050⁷
- Professionals identify knowledge of dementia-related care issues as important for their practice³ but may experience barriers to receiving training in geriatrics, including distance to training, cost, and lack of time^{4,8}
- Distance-learning may circumvent these barriers, and has been found to be acceptable to professionals training in geriatrics^{5,8}
- In response to the needs of providers, the Wyoming Center on Aging (WyCOA) created a free online certificate program in dementia care with Introductory and Advanced certificate courses
- The current study examined feasibility and training outcomes for the Dementia Care Certificate program

2. Objectives

- Evaluate the feasibility of an online certificate program providing training in dementia care
- Evaluate the acceptability of an online certificate program providing training in dementia care
- Evaluate knowledge and practice change outcomes following participation in an online certificate program providing training in dementia

3. Methods

Sample

- Healthcare professionals and lay and family caregivers ($N = 232$) who completed one or both of the Dementia Care Certificate courses from August 2014 – July, 2015
- Participants were recruited via electronic advertisements

Instrument

- Ten-item questionnaire created by WyCOA to evaluate satisfaction, knowledge change, areas of practice change, and recommendations for future trainings
 - Satisfaction and knowledge were assessed on a scale of 1 (“Poor”) to 5 (“High”)
 - Practice change was assessed via a multi-response question

4. Analysis

- Demographic characteristics, descriptive and inferential analyses were obtained via SPSS, version 23

5. Results

Participant Characteristics

- A total of 39.73% of registrants for the Dementia Care Certificate earned at least one certificate
- Participants with duplicate and incomplete data were excluded from analyses, resulting in 307 evaluation responses aggregated across both courses
- The Dementia Care Certificate was completed by participants from 11 states and one international country
- Nursing was the most common profession in the Introductory ($n = 188$; 57.6%) and Advanced courses ($n = 47$; 46.08%)

5. Results, cont.

Program Outcomes

- Participants in both courses reported high levels of satisfaction with the instructors, course materials, and educational experiences

Table 1. Satisfaction and Knowledge Outcomes

	Satisfaction with Instructors (Mdn, IQR)	Satisfaction with Materials (Mdn, IQR)	Satisfaction with Educational Experience (Mdn, IQR)	Pre-Knowledge (M, SD)	Post-Knowledge (M, SD)	Knowledge Change (%)
Introductory course (n = 205)	4.00, 4-5	4.00, 4-5	4.00, 4-5	3.05, 0.80	4.11, 0.64	81.50
Advanced course (n = 102)	5.00, 4-5	5.00, 4-5	5.00, 4-5	2.82, 0.86	4.06, 0.58	84.31

- There was a significant increase in knowledge from pre- to post-training in the Introductory course, $t(204) = -22.41, p < .001$
- Participants in the Advanced course reported a significant increase in knowledge from pre- to post-training $t(101) = -16.14, p < .001$.
- Participants identified areas of practice change in which they could engage as a result of the training

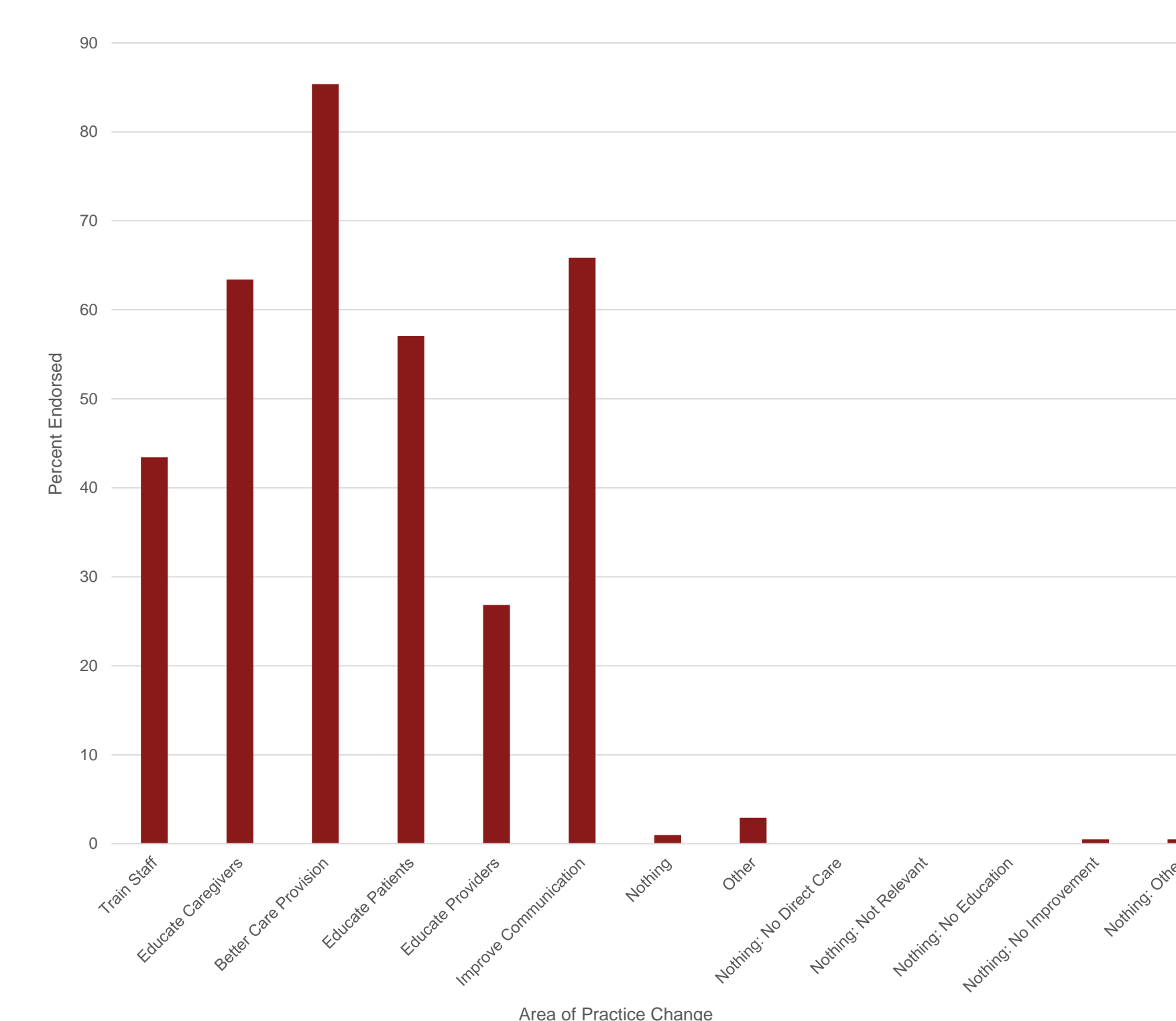


Figure 1. Areas of practice change following the Introductory course

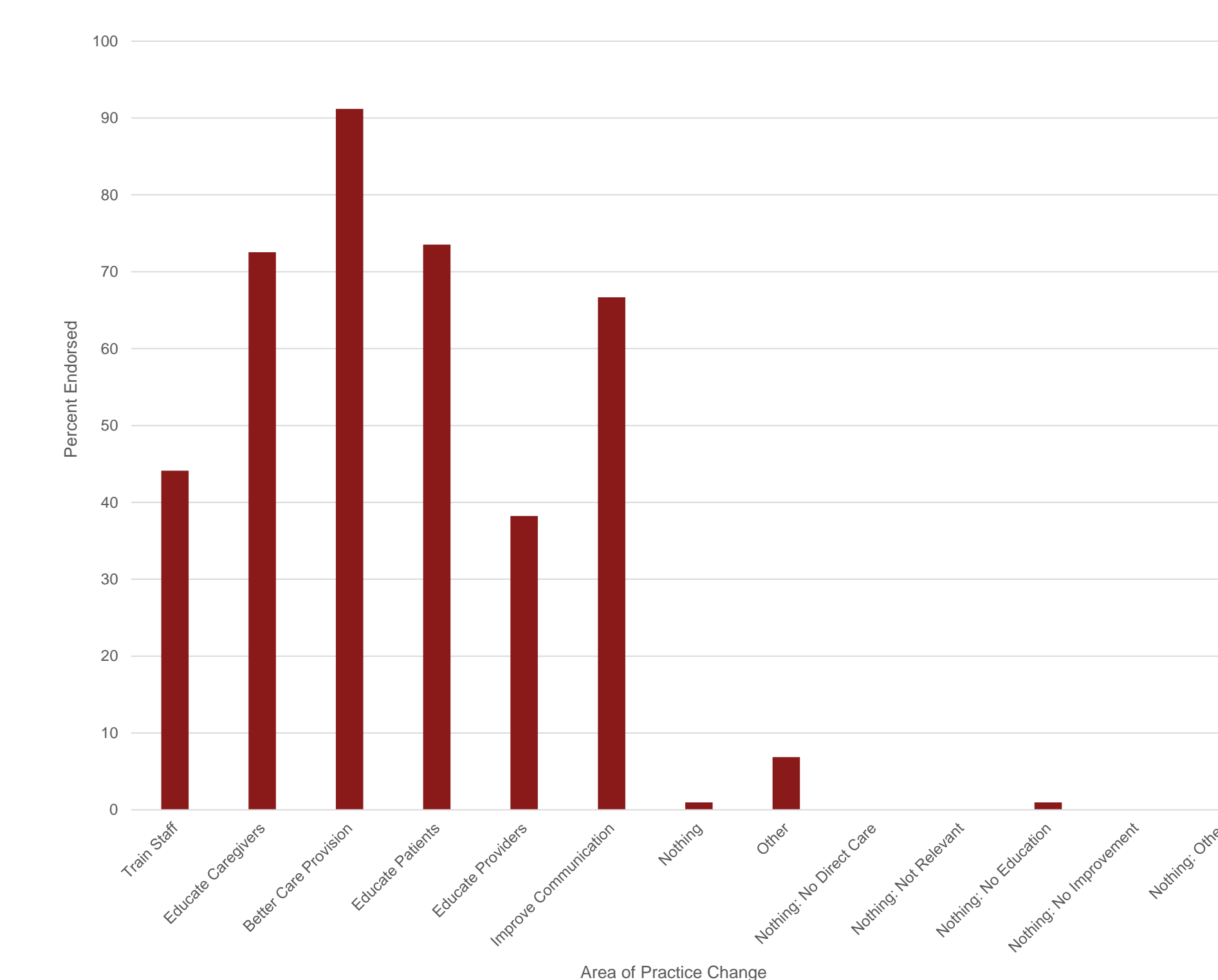


Figure 2. Areas of practice change following the Advanced course

6. Conclusions

- Evaluation of the Dementia Care Certificate program shows that it was feasible to implement and acceptable to participants
- Positive outcomes following the certificate program included increased knowledge and identification of areas of practice for which the training provided information
- The results contribute to the body of literature demonstrating the feasibility and acceptability of distance-learning certificate and educational programs in geriatrics to healthcare professionals⁵
- Given the large expected increase in the population of older adults⁵ and the significant shortage of providers^{1,2}, accessible and effective training options are necessary to ensure a competent workforce
- This free, online offering may circumvent barriers to dementia education across both rural and urban areas^{4,8}
- Further research should assess reasons for non-completion and elucidate whether training topics should be tailored to specific disciplines to improve acceptability and care practices

7. References

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