(S106) NATIONAL MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS NURSE AND PHYSICIAN EXTENDER TRAINING PROGRAM
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Background: As patients and families with multiple sclerosis (MS) begin their journey, they are confronted with unfamiliar medical terminology, confusing scientific literature, and complicated patient-assistance programs. The health-care team’s goal is to provide education, support, and resources that clarify pathophysiology, alleviate a myriad of symptoms associated with MS, and ultimately enhance patient quality of life. Advancements in the diagnosis and treatment of MS have increased the demand for specialized health-care providers who are familiar with emerging clinical concepts. Objectives: The central mission of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS)—sponsored National Multiple Sclerosis Nurse and Physician Extender Training Program is to develop a pathway for nurses and physician extenders to engage with fellow health-care professionals from diverse cultures and backgrounds; illustrate multidisciplinary and collaborative aspects of care that are essential to the chronic neurologic illness health-care model; highlight opportunities for career advancement in MS, ie, MS Nurse Certification Exam; introduce the nurse and/or physician extender to the complexities of treating MS patients and their families; and refine the knowledge and skills of experienced health-care professionals by reviewing cutting-edge research, discussing clinical investigation, and critically evaluating a series of representative MS patient vignettes. Methods: Twenty-two applicants from MS centers across the United States completed an intensive training program at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas. Applicants actively participated in real-time clinical interactions with patients and families from Monday morning to Friday afternoon. Multidisciplinary lectures were intended to display a comprehensive approach to MS care while addressing such topics as magnetic resonance imaging interpretation, guided imagery, nursing research, vitamin D, sexual dysfunction, neuro-ophthalmology, and baclofen pump management. Results: To quantify the knowledge gained, we administered a pre-test on Monday morning and a post-test on Friday afternoon. Each participant completed an extensive evaluation and a follow-up “Impact on Practice” survey. Conclusions: We will report the results of the pre-test and post-test, along with the “Impact on Practice” survey.

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