# Student Characteristics to Assess in End of Life Education Research

**Megan Pfitzinger Lippe PhD, MSN, RN**
Capstone College of Nursing - The University of Alabama
**Patricia Carter PhD, RN, CNS**
The University of Texas at Austin- School of Nursing

## Problem:

- Student characteristics always measured in education research
- **What is measured and by what means remains at the discretion of the researchers**
- **Consistency across educational research is lacking**
- **PURPOSE: Share results of a literature review identifying student characteristics to measure in palliative and end-of-life care research**

## Methods:

- Databases searched: Medline, EBSCOHost, ERIC, CINAHL
- Inclusion criteria:
  - Peer-reviewed
  - Written in English
  - Published in or before 2015
  - Assessed characteristics of undergraduate (associate degree and baccalaureate degree) nursing students

## Key Student Characteristics

- **Age**
- **Previous Experience Caring for Dying Persons**
- **Previous Experience with Death/Loss**
- **Previous Education on End-of-Life Care**
- **Religion**
- **Program of Enrollment (when applicable)**

## Conclusion

- Measurement of key variables will enhance generalizability of findings
- Optimum means to collect characteristic data unclear
- Characteristics analyzed inconsistently, resulting in unclear relationships between variables
- Specific measure needed for standardized assessment

| Search Results | Frequently Assessed Student Characteristics | Not Frequently Assessed |
|---|---|---|
| <ul><li>25 Articles</li><li>Characteristics described sample: 15</li><li>Relationships among variables: 10</li></ul> | <ul><li>Age</li><li>Gender</li><li>Previous experience caring for dying persons</li><li>Previous experience with death/loss</li><li>Previous education on end-of-life care</li><li>Religion</li></ul> | <ul><li>Academic progression</li><li>Previous education</li><li>Ethnicity/race</li><li>Program of enrollment</li><li>Previous healthcare experience</li><li>Place of residence</li></ul> |