

Exploring barriers for Family Physicians to provide end-of-life care

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Introduction

Family Physicians are trained to provide person-centered, comprehensive, continuing and community based primary care. The provision of palliative care is considered a core competency of community family medicine.

A number of studies have shown that patients value the contribution of their Family Physician who plays a role in end-of-life care. Data also suggests that fewer acute care services are used when a Family Physician provides ongoing continuity of care. Palliative care services are in demand and will become increasingly so in the future, and yet many Family Physicians are "opting out" of the provision of this type of care to their patients.

The **aim of this QI** project was to gain a better understanding of what the barriers are for Family Physicians to provide ongoing palliative and end of life care to their patients.

Material and methods

QUALITATIVE APPROACH

- ♦ One-on-One interviews with Family Physicians from the Victoria metropolitan area
- ♦ Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim
- ♦ Thematic Analysis
 - 1) Semantic Analysis
 - 2) Latent Analysis



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Results

- ♦ Ten Family Physicians were interviewed (saturation at 8)
- ♦ SEMANTIC ANALYSIS

I would like to contribute without being frustrated by the amount of time it takes, patients appreciate the fact that their regular doctor can continue to look after them. If I can get to them easily, then yes, I'll do home visits. [Interview 1]

I commute on bike so there's a limit to how far I'll go to do a house call. [Interview 7]

I wouldn't trust that I necessarily know which nurse is going, when they're going to go and that I'm going to have access to someone right away when I need them. [Interview 8]

- ♦ LATENT ANALYSIS

Theme: "Willingness ... But"

Providing end-of-life care was seen as an intrinsic part of family medicine for the vast majority of interviewed physicians. Most of them have not had any formal palliative care education, having learned with colleagues and "by doing it". Despite this willingness there are many challenges that impact the ability of physicians to provide end of life care and practice family medicine the way they would like to.

Three main themes:



Final considerations and implications for practice

- ♦ Family Physicians recognize the importance of their role and want to provide end-of-life care to their patients. Despite its importance there are many challenges that impact their ability to provide this care.
- ♦ Although home visits are considered a critical aspect of being able to provide palliative and end-of-life care it is one of the major challenges Family Physicians identified.
- ♦ Difficulties with billing is a challenge to many Family Physicians. This finding is supported by the literature.
- ♦ System awareness can potentially be addressed through education.
 - Since completing the interviews we piloted a "Dine & Learn" initiative. Family Physicians were invited to attend an evening event where a Palliative Care Physician and other members of the tertiary palliative care team shared resources and processes available to support them.
 - 21 Family Physicians attended the event. Feedback received suggested that the event was successful in starting connections and providing useful resources.

Dine & Learn