

Hospital-based palliative care for patients with advanced illness: challenges and opportunities.

Ching-Yu Kao*

Department of Nursing, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

Abstract

Hospital-based palliative care is an essential component of end-of-life care for patients with advanced illnesses. Palliative care aims to provide relief from the symptoms and stress associated with serious illness, with the goal of improving quality of life for patients and their families. However, providing effective hospital-based palliative care can be challenging and requires overcoming several obstacles.

Keywords: Palliative Care, Advanced Illness, Hospital-Based Studies

Introduction

One of the main challenges of hospital-based palliative care is the limited availability of resources, including personnel, funding, and facilities. Hospitals may have limited staffing or funding for palliative care services, which can lead to inadequate care for patients with advanced illnesses. Additionally, hospitals may not have dedicated palliative care units or spaces, which can make it difficult to provide patients with a comfortable and supportive environment [1].

Another challenge is the lack of communication and collaboration among healthcare providers. Palliative care requires a multidisciplinary team approach, with input from physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains, and other healthcare professionals. However, healthcare providers may not always communicate effectively or work together seamlessly, which can lead to fragmented care and poor outcomes for patients.

There are also challenges related to patient and family education and involvement. Patients and families may not fully understand the goals of palliative care or the options available to them, and may have cultural or religious beliefs that impact their decision-making. Healthcare providers must take the time to educate patients and families about palliative care and involve them in the decision-making process [2].

Despite these challenges, there are also opportunities to improve hospital-based palliative care. One opportunity is to increase education and training for healthcare providers in palliative care. Healthcare providers may not have received formal education or training in palliative care, which can lead to a lack of understanding or confidence in providing care. By increasing education and training opportunities, healthcare providers can improve their skills and knowledge in palliative care, leading to better outcomes for patients.

Another opportunity is to increase access to palliative care services, including expanding the use of telemedicine and other technology to provide care to patients in remote or underserved areas. Additionally, hospitals can work to develop partnerships with community-based palliative care providers to ensure continuity of care for patients who are discharged from the hospital.

Hospital-based palliative care can be a challenging and complex field, but it also presents numerous opportunities to improve the quality of life for patients facing serious illnesses. Some of the key challenges and opportunities in hospital-based palliative care include:

Challenges

Limited resources: Palliative care teams may have limited resources and staffing, which can make it difficult to provide comprehensive care for all patients who need it.

Communication difficulties: Palliative care teams often need to communicate with patients and their families about difficult topics such as end-of-life care, which can be emotionally challenging and require sensitive handling.

Integration with other hospital services: Palliative care teams need to work closely with other hospital services, such as oncology or cardiology, to ensure that patients receive coordinated care. However, this can be challenging due to differences in approaches and priorities.

Lack of training: Many healthcare professionals, including doctors and nurses, may not have received adequate training in palliative care, which can lead to suboptimal care for patients with serious illnesses [3].

Opportunities

Improving quality of life: Palliative care teams have the opportunity to improve the quality of life for patients with

*Correspondence to: Ching-Yu Kao, Department of Nursing, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia, E-mail: kao@chingu.tw.ed

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serious illnesses by managing symptoms, providing emotional support, and addressing spiritual and cultural needs.

Patient-centered care: Palliative care emphasizes patient-centered care, which means that patients and their families are involved in decision-making and have a voice in their care.

Interdisciplinary collaboration: Palliative care teams work collaboratively with a range of healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses, social workers, and chaplains, to provide holistic care that addresses the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of patients.

Advance care planning: Palliative care teams can help patients and their families with advance care planning, which can ensure that patients receive care that aligns with their goals and values.

Overall, hospital-based palliative care presents both challenges and opportunities. By addressing the challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities, palliative care teams can help patients with serious illnesses live as fully and comfortably as possible [4].

Conclusion

In conclusion, hospital-based palliative care is essential for patients with advanced illnesses, but there are significant

challenges that must be overcome. By increasing education and training for healthcare providers, improving communication and collaboration among healthcare providers, and expanding access to palliative care services, hospitals can provide high-quality palliative care to patients and families.

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