

Barriers to home death for Canadian cancer patients: a literature review

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Introduction

Cancer continues to be the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the world. Multiple recent studies and polls have shown that most patients prefer to die at home. Despite these wishes, most Canadian patients continue to die in hospitals (1,2).

In a recent report issued by Health Quality Ontario, 64.9% of 54,000 patients in Ontario Canada died in hospital (3). Efforts to improve palliative care outreach and community resources are needed to support greater care in the community, with the ultimate goal to increase planned home deaths.

Objectives

To narratively review the peer-reviewed literature surrounding the existing barriers and roadblocks challenging home deaths for cancer patients wanting to die at home throughout Canada.

Methods

A literature search was conducted in Ovid Medline, Embase, Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials, PsychInfo, and Ebsco CINAHL to retrieve studies discussing barriers faced by Canadian cancer patients in achieving home death.

Results

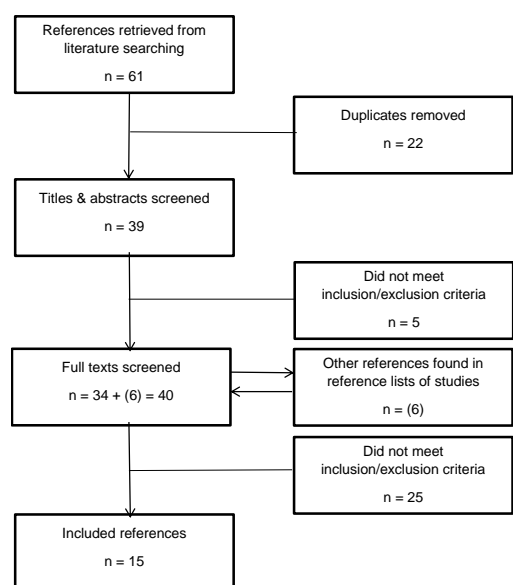
61 references were retrieved, from which 7 qualitative studies and 8 population-based cohort studies were deemed relevant and thus analyzed. We identified 4 main barriers to facilitating home death for cancer patients:

1. inadequacy of support services
2. insufficiency of family caregivers
3. home location and sizes, and
4. discontinuity of care by family physicians.

Conclusions

To overcome the four major barriers identified, measures such as having well-prepared and well-educated family caregivers, extending support services to remote communities, and tackling the problem of lack of family physicians in certain areas of Canada, should be taken.

Research process flowchart



References

1. Statistics Canada. "Deaths in hospital and elsewhere, Canada, provinces and territories.", accessed 7 Jun, 2016. <http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?lang=eng&id=1020509>.
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3. Health Quality Ontario. 2016. "Palliative care at the end of life." Health Quality Ontario, accessed 6 Oct 2016. <http://www.hqontario.ca/Portals/0/documents/system-performance/palliative-care-report-en.pdf>.