

THE PERSPECTIVES OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS ON CASE MANAGERS AS ADVANCE CARE PLANNING CONVERSATIONALISTS

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INTRODUCTION

Personalized treatment and symptom management, in which future care options are integrated, are crucial to manage care for patients with advanced cancer, making **Advance Care Planning (ACP)** essential.

If executed timely, ACP has proven to improve quality of life, increase the chance of dying in the preferred location and lower health care costs [1,2].

CASE MANAGER

A nurse in the outpatient clinic with special training in how to manage and evaluate all aspects of patient care. They are easily accessible, have an informal and **personal patient approach** and have extensive disease- and treatment specific knowledge.

OBJECTIVE

This study evaluates the perspectives of healthcare professionals on ACP conversations conducted by **case managers**.

CONCLUSION

Healthcare professionals experience a **positive impact** of case managers taking on the role of ACP conversationalists. However, the division of roles and responsibilities proves crucial. These findings provide valuable insights for the implementation of case managers in advance care planning.

METHODOLOGY

12 semi-structured interviews were conducted with case managers and oncologists (in training). The interviews followed a predetermined topic guide.

ANALYSIS

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. A thematic iterative analysis approach was executed using ATLAS.ti.



RESULTS

Four main themes were identified.

Theme 1: The case manager as healthcare professional in ACP conversations.

- Oncologists and case managers agree that a case manager is the most suitable ACP conversationalist in a hospital setting.
- ACP conversations enrich the relationship between the patient and the case manager.

Theme 2: The division of roles and responsibilities.

- Case managers capture the patient's context, values and preferences.
- Medical decision-making is always a physician's responsibility.
- GP's should be engaged in an early stage.

Theme 3: The process of ACP conversations.

- Guidelines for the timing of ACP conversations are essential.
- Oncologists (in training) prefer a written and oral summary of the conversation.

Theme 4: The future

- Case managers want training in conversation techniques, summarizing and time management.
- Increasing ACP conversations could lead to more and earlier decisions on treatment preferences and/or limits.



References:

- [1] Starr, L.T., et al., Associations Among End-of-Life Discussions, Health-Care Utilization, and Costs in Persons With Advanced Cancer: A Systematic Review. Am J Hosp Palliat Care, 2019. 36(10): p. 913-926
[2] Mack, J.W., et al., Associations between end-of-life discussion characteristics and care received near death: a prospective cohort study. J Clin Oncol, 2012. 30(35): p. 4387-95.

