

Undermining Well-being: The Ripple Effects of Palliative Care Deficiencies on Armenian Doctors and Their Patients

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BACKGROUND

Integrating palliative care into early treatment significantly enhances patient outcomes and quality of life. However, in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) like Armenia, the implementation of palliative care is inconsistent, profoundly impacting both patients and healthcare providers. This study investigates primary care doctors' perspectives on palliative care, highlighting how educational gaps and systemic deficiencies adversely affect their professional well-being and, consequently, patient care.

METHODS

A survey involving 124 doctors in Armenia, including 85.5% primary care doctors, was conducted. The survey comprised quantitative questions about familiarity and training in palliative care, integration frequency, perceived importance, and support for palliative care. Qualitative responses were also collected to understand personal experiences and suggestions for improvement.

RESULTS

An overwhelming majority of respondents (119) reported no formal training in palliative care, despite recognizing its critical importance (106). Significant barriers to integration included lack of resources (120), lack of training (107), and time constraints (104). These barriers severely impacted doctors' job satisfaction and professional well-being, with younger doctors experiencing higher levels of burnout but also being more attentive to providing palliative care services. Many respondents (87) attributed their burnout to the lack of robust palliative care modalities.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings underscore a critical gap in palliative care integration in Armenia, adversely affecting both patient outcomes and healthcare providers' well-being. Addressing these barriers through strategic improvements in resource allocation, comprehensive training programs, and public awareness initiatives is essential. Such measures are crucial not only for enhancing patient care but also for safeguarding doctors' mental and professional health, ultimately ensuring a more sustainable and effective healthcare system in Armenia.

