

# CURRENT STATUS OF HOME CARE PROVIDED BY HOME CARE NURSES FOR PEDIATRIC PATIENTS WITH CANCER IN THE END-OF-LIFE STAGE: A QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

Setsumi kudo<sup>1</sup>, Yoshie Niwa<sup>1</sup>, Masako Shirasaka<sup>2</sup>

1 Osaka Seikei University, School of Nursing Science, Japan  
2 Home-Visiting Nursing Station Art de Vivre, Japan

## Key Words

Pediatric Patients with Cancer; Home-Based End-of-Life Care; Support for Parents; Communication

## Purpose

Cancer is the leading cause of death among children. In recent years, the demand for home-based end-of-life care for pediatric patients with cancer has increased, and this trend has also been observed in Japan. This study aimed to clarify the current status and challenges of home care nurses' support for pediatric patients with cancer at the end-of-life stage.

## Methods

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine nurses, each lasting 45–60 minutes. The interview content focused on three main themes: end-of-life care, memorable episodes, and challenges of home-based end-of-life care. Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

## Results-1

All participants were female, with three nurses with less than 10 years of experience and six nurses with over 10 years of experience. The pediatric cancer patients they cared for included five boys and four girls, aged 3–12 years, diagnosed with brain tumors (four), neuroblastoma (four), and leukemia (one).

## Results-2

All the patients received end-of-life care at home, for the child and the parents. Support for the child included communication, emphasized by three nurses, followed by monitoring of the general condition, symptom management, and medication administration. Support for parents included emotional support as mentioned by three nurses, followed by guidance on medical procedures and advice on dietary changes. Inadequate communication between parents and physicians was observed in some cases, making it difficult for parents to make informed decisions. In such situations, a nurse's role as a mediator between parents and physicians is essential for providing high-quality care.

## Conclusions

Pediatric home care nurses play a key role in supporting end-of-life care for pediatric patients with cancer. Only a few nurses recognized the importance of this role, and greater awareness is needed. Strengthening continuing education and support systems for home care nurses is expected to improve the quality of home-based end-of-life care.

## References

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