

Paper 1 Summary: Essential Elements of Integrated Coordinated Palliative Care

Question

What are the essential elements of an integrated and coordinated palliative care program that will help improve access to quality palliative care in Canada?

This paper looks at the essential elements of an integrated and coordinated palliative care program that will help improve access to quality palliative care in Canada.

Summary

Integrated palliative care has positive health and societal benefits. However, despite two decades of work by many organizations and numerous reports and recommendations, the majority of Canadians don't have access to regional, comprehensive, coordinated and integrated palliative care. Work needs to be done to involve communities in planning palliative care and palliative care should be linked to prevention, early detection, and treatment programs.

Findings

- Traditional family caring roles can't be taken for granted. Patient demands are changing, too. People want to determine and tailor their healthcare, including the opportunity to be cared for and die in the place they prefer.
- According to the Ipsos report, 90% of Canadians feel patients should receive care in their home, and 86% feel that the public health care system should cover palliative home care services.
- While there are different types of integration operating at different levels within the health system, they are interconnected. Each impacts systems, teamwork and professional behavior.
- The way integration is designed for a given initiative is shaped by the goals of care, existing arrangements, available resources and its size. An initiative can be fully integrated with other elements of care or organizations or something less like information sharing.

Implications

1. All people should have access to palliative care services that are essential, safe, affordable and effective (universality). Integrating palliative care within regular treatment is supported by evidence that it improves the quality of life of patients.
2. Communities need to be involved in planning palliative care programs. Using a population health lens, communities are best placed to address the unique socioeconomic and geographic circumstances that exist in their area.
3. National health systems need to link palliative care to prevention, early detection, and treatment programs. It shouldn't be an optional extra.

Recommended Readings

[Ewert B, Hodiamont F, van Wijngaarden J, Payne S, Groot M, Hasselaar J, et al. Building a taxonomy of integrated palliative care initiatives: results from a focus group. BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care 2015 December 08.](#)

[Shaw, S., Rosen, R., Rumbold, B. An Overview of Integrated Care in the NHS—What is Integrated Care - 2011 - Nuffield Trust](#)