

INVESTIGATING BARRIERS TO ACCESS AND DELIVERY OF END OF LIFE CARE FOR PERSONS WITH DEMENTIA IN ONTARIO

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Brief Description of Research or Project: This study examined how palliative care is accessed and delivered within long-term care facilities in Ontario. In addition, this study investigated the role of policies and funding incentives in facilitating or prohibiting access to palliative care. Preliminary findings indicated that the delivery of care is not standardized across facilities and often occurs too late. Moreover, most palliative care is focused on pain management and lacks holistic approaches such as pastoral counselling. This may be attributed to lack of funding and heavy workloads. Finally, best-practice reporting by facilities is necessary to ensure that knowledge is shared.

Why is this research important to profile at the Research Day 2014? This study is important to profile at Research Day 2014 because there is no published literature describing what end of life care looks like in long-term care facilities for persons with dementia in Ontario. Most palliative care guidelines are focused on cancer patients, and such guidelines are often inappropriate for those with dementia. Most individuals with end-stage dementia reside in long-term care facilities because of their extensive care needs. Thus, most end of life care for those with dementia currently occurs in long-term care facilities. This study aims to investigate the barriers and facilitators to quality end of life care for those with dementia who reside in long-term care facilities. A potential outcome of the findings is the creation of a decision support tool that helps staff identify when to initiate palliative care. This study includes staff from many different disciplines, including personal support workers, nurses and volunteer staff at 5 different facilities in London, ON. As the population continues to age, and more and more of the baby boomer generation moves through the long-term care system, it will become increasingly necessary to manage end of life care in long-term care facilities, and sharing best practices is key to reducing strain on the system