

## Hospital-Based Palliative Care and Critical Examination of Patient Needs

Bonnei Chagta\*

Department of Medicine, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada

### DESCRIPTION

Palliative care is a specialized approach to healthcare that focuses on improving the quality of life for patients facing serious illnesses or nearing the end of life. It emphasizes pain and symptom management, psychosocial support, and communication, and can be beneficial to a wide range of patients, including those in hospital settings. This article delves into the importance of analyzing palliative care needs in hospitalized patients, the factors involved, and how this analysis can enhance patient-centered care.

### The significance of analyzing palliative care needs

Analyzing palliative care needs in hospitalized patients is crucial for several reasons

**Improved patient outcomes:** Identifying and addressing palliative care needs early in a hospitalization can lead to better symptom management, emotional support, and overall patient well-being.

**Enhanced communication:** Palliative care assessments facilitate open and honest communication between patients, families, and healthcare providers. Discussing goals of care and treatment preferences helps align medical care with patient values.

**Personalized care plans:** Analyzing palliative care needs allows healthcare teams to tailor care plans to individual patients, addressing their specific symptoms, concerns, and goals.

**Better resource allocation:** Identifying patients who may benefit from palliative care helps allocate resources more effectively, ensuring that those in need receive the appropriate level of support.

**Reduced healthcare costs:** Early palliative care interventions can lead to fewer hospital readmissions, shorter lengths of stay, and less reliance on aggressive treatments, resulting in reduced healthcare costs.

### Factors involved in analyzing palliative care needs

**Patient's diagnosis:** Patients with serious, life-limiting, or advanced illnesses often have palliative care needs. Common

conditions include cancer, heart failure, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), and advanced dementia.

**Symptom burden:** Patients experiencing pain, shortness of breath, nausea, fatigue, or other distressing symptoms may benefit from palliative care.

**Prognosis:** Palliative care is appropriate for patients with limited life expectancy or those experiencing a decline in health.

**Goals of care:** Patients who express preferences for comfort-focused care rather than curative treatments may benefit from palliative care.

**Complex medical conditions:** Patients with complex medical conditions, frequent hospitalizations, or a history of aggressive interventions may require palliative care assessments.

**Psychosocial factors:** Patients experiencing emotional distress, anxiety, depression, or spiritual concerns should be considered for palliative care.

**Patient and family wishes:** The desires and values of both the patient and their family should be considered when analyzing palliative care needs.

### Analyzing palliative care needs

**Identification:** Hospital staff, including nurses, physicians, and social workers, play a vital role in identifying patients who may benefit from palliative care. Regular screenings and assessments can help in this process.

**Assessment:** Once identified, a comprehensive palliative care assessment is conducted. This includes evaluating the patient's symptoms, psychosocial needs, spiritual concerns, and goals of care.

**Interdisciplinary collaboration:** Palliative care often involves an interdisciplinary team, including physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains, and therapists. These professionals collaborate to develop a personalized care plan.

**Communication:** Healthcare providers communicate with patients and families to discuss the findings of the palliative care assessment, address concerns, and establish goals of care.

**Correspondence to:** Bonnei Chagta, Department of Medicine, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, E-mail: [bonnei.chagta777@cebap.org](mailto:bonnei.chagta777@cebap.org)

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**Implementation:** The care plan is put into action, focusing on symptom management, emotional support, and goal-oriented care.

**Evaluation:** Regular reassessment ensures that the palliative care plan remains aligned with the patient's evolving needs and goals.

## CONCLUSION

Analyzing palliative care needs in hospitalized patients is essential for improving the quality of care and enhancing

patient-centered outcomes. By identifying patients who may benefit from palliative care early in their hospitalization, healthcare providers can address symptoms, provide emotional support, and align care plans with patient values and preferences. This comprehensive approach not only improves the well-being of patients and their families but also optimizes resource allocation and reduces healthcare costs. As healthcare continues to evolve, recognizing and addressing palliative care needs remains a cornerstone of compassionate and patient-focused medicine.