



An Analysis of Documents Guiding Palliative Care in Five Canadian Provinces

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KEY POINTS

- There is little research in the consistency and content of documents guiding the palliative approach to care in long-term care (LTC) homes
- Barriers to an effective palliative approach within LTC settings include lack of education, training, resources, and communication
- Advance care planning (ACP) is negatively affected by the staffing and time constraints as well as lack of consistency among guidelines
- Consistent guidelines and policies may improve quality of life by standardizing care and promoting comprehensiveness of palliative care

RESEARCH TOPIC

- To analyze the extent of palliative content across high-level guiding documents related to the care of persons residing in Canadian LTC homes

METHODOLOGY

- The study used the "Square of Care" framework for hospice palliative care proposed by the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) to systematically determine the extent of palliative care content in guiding national and provincial palliative care documents
- Documents were analyzed using the Documentation Matrix and Analytical Framework
- Content analysis was conducted by two reviewers and discrepancies were resolved by a third reviewer

RESULTS

- 25 documents were included from 273 documents identified in the systematic search
- Most of the documents were created nationally (48%) or in Ontario (28%)
- Documents varied in palliative topics discussed and LTC was discussed minimally
- Social issues, psychological and loss/grief were the most commonly addressed "Square of Care" domains, while disease management and end-of-life/death management were least frequently addressed

CONCLUSION

- There is a lack of consistent and comprehensive palliative content across all documents and LTC specific palliative documents despite the mention of the LTC setting in nearly all analyzed documents
- The lack of consistent palliative content from palliative, professional, and government organizations may lead to misinterpretation of palliative approach principles and guidelines
- Ensuring consistency in documents addressing the palliative approach in LTC settings may improve the quality of life of residents
- There is significant need for the development of LTC specific palliative care guidelines across Canada