



An Evaluation of the Strengthening a Palliative Approach in Long-Term Care (SPA-LTC) Program

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This project (2014 - 2016) was funded by the Canadian Frailty Network (previously Technology Evaluation in the Elderly Network) and supported by Government of Canada through Networks of Centres of Excellence



Canadian Frailty Network

Réseau canadien des soins aux personnes fragilisées

Known previously as Technology Evaluation in the Elderly Network, TVN

KEY MESSAGES

- The combined interventions were effective in informing and involving residents and family in care decisions
- The SPA-LTC is effective in improving the delivery of a palliative approach to care in LTC settings
- Specialized skills and knowledge are beneficial to staff for improving skills related to palliative care

KEY POINTS

- There are increasing number of resident living and dying in LTC homes that require a palliative approach to care
- However, LTC homes are ill-prepared for the deaths of residents and provide sub-optimal palliative care, including poor pain management, poor engagement in advance care planning, unnecessary hospitalizations and use of feeding tubes.
- The SPA-LTC program is an intervention that can help address these issues and build capacity among LTC staff to improve the delivery of a palliative approach

RESEARCH TOPICS

- The purpose of this study was to evaluate the SPA-LTC program's impact on resident and family , staff knowledge and self-efficacy in palliative care and organization outcomes.

HOW WAS THIS STUDY DONE?

- The study used a mixed methods design that included both quantitative and qualitative data from four LTC homes in Ontario
- Chart audit, family care conference (FCCs), surveys and focus groups were used to evaluate perceptions from staff, residents and families regarding the SPA-LTC program and gain organization

RESULTS

- 64% (n=24) residents had FCCs
- Family reported feeling well supported during FCCs (mean = 0.88; SD = 1.15) and perceived them to be positive and useful
- Higher proportion of residents who had FCCs had dementia, suggesting higher need among this population
- Staff felt the comfort care rounds provided opportunity for critical reflection surrounding death
- Overall, illness trajectory pamphlets were perceived as informative
- PSW and support staff groups appeared to have higher needs for education and need for inter-professional collaboration (n=317; 45% staff survey response rate)
- Post-implementation findings included slight improvements in the appropriateness and number of ED visits and hospital admissions