Assessing Family Care Conferences in Long-Term Care: Lessons From Content Analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Family Care Conferences (FCC) aim to support structured, systematic communication around goals and plans for End of Life (EOL). Poor communication with staff contributes to families feeling unprepared, distressed, and dissatisfied with care. Family Care Conferences (FCC) seek to address the majority of palliative care domains identified by the canadian hospice palliative care association (CPC) and other sources. 

METHODS

- 39 residents were enrolled in SPAC- LTC with a Palliative Performance Scale of 40% (nearing death)
- 24 FCCs organized by LTC staff for enrolled residents based on clinical expertise (e.g., declining and family would benefit from EOL communication)
- Data collected from 41 FCC forms and site-specific electronic charts to explore content discussed and care planned.
- Directed content analysis using the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association’s ‘Square of Care’ model domain(s).

OBJECTIVES

As part of the ‘Strengthening a Palliative Approach to Care’ (SPAC-LTC) project 6-8, FCCs were implemented in 4 LTC sites in Ontario, Canada. The purpose of this sub-study is to examine FCC: content, and (b) guiding processes such as documentation and multidisciplinary staff participation using mixed methods.

RESULTS

- FCCs address the majority of palliative care domains.
- Higher proportion of goals documented on FCC forms (M 1.9 vs. 0.24[0.6]).
- Planned interventions per FCC 2.0 (SD 2.2) vs. 0.22[0.4].
- Incidence of 1.4 (FCC) per resident.

CONCLUSIONS

- FCCs address the majority of palliative care domains.
- Implications to optimize FCCs include tailoring use of FCC forms, and content, and
- Placing greater emphasis on clinical skills and knowledge.

REFERENCES


Graph 1: Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association: 'Square of Care'