

00042 Challenges in Providing End of Life Care in a Prison Ward Within a Restructured Hospital in Singapore

Wang Liyun, Goh Hwee Jin, Rasidah Alias, Wong Yoke Ping

Changi General Hospital

Aims: In the past 2 decades, Singapore is one of the Southeast Asian countries that have been working relentlessly to develop and improve palliative care. There has been significant advancement in palliative care for general patient population. However, there is little mention of the palliative care program for a special group of patients- the imprisoned patients. Currently, there is only one restructured hospital in Singapore that has been providing inpatient palliative care for hospitalised prisoners since 2012. The objective here is to discuss the unique challenges encountered by the palliative care providers when providing end of life care to the imprisoned patients in this hospital.

Methodology: Retrospective case record audit of imprisoned patients receiving palliative care was conducted for the period from September 2012 to August 2017. The policy governing the care of imprisoned patients was used as a reference. Literatures were reviewed to gain some insight into the international practice in the same environment. Feedback from ward staff was sought to facilitate the understanding of difficulty faced when caring for those patients.

Result: 21 imprisoned patients were referred for end of life care in the past 5 years. All of them were diagnosed with advanced cancer. They experienced pain and other distressing symptoms. Challenges identified include: late referrals; barriers impeding good symptom control due to trust issues between patients and healthcare providers; poor psychosocial support because of limitation of visitations and counselling ; ward staff has limited experience in end of life care, and difficulty in discharge planning from policy and processes.

Conclusion: Various barriers do exist and challenge palliative care providers, not only in Singapore, but worldwide as well. Although there is some evidence of initiation of palliative care program and models of care in the western countries, provision of end of life care for imprisoned patients remains under researched globally.