Association for Palliative Medicine

Article of the Month

What are the views of hospital-based generalist palliative care professionals on what facilitates or hinders collaboration with in-patient specialist palliative care teams? A systematically constructed narrative synthesis

A systematic review using narrative synthesis explored collaboration between generalists in palliative care and specialist palliative care teams in hospital. Twenty-three studies were identified. Five themes were drawn from the literature.

Collaboration was seen as beneficial yet challenging. Communication between specialists and generalists, and clarification of the role of both were important in facilitating collaboration. An integrated approach between specialists and generalists seemed to enhance collaboration. The education provided by specialist teams was identified as a significant benefit of referring.

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'My body's falling apart.' Understanding the experiences of patients with advanced multimorbidity to improve care: serial interviews with patients and carers

A multi-centre interview-based study explored the experiences of care of patients with two or more advanced illnesses. Patients were identified as likely to be in the last year of life. A total of 87 interviews were carried out, at 8-12 week intervals, with a total of 37 patients and 17 carers. Interpretive analysis was used.

Two themes were identified: 'experiences of care' and 'understanding' (of their illnesses). Patients and carers described a progressive physical decline, with struggles in coping with multiple care systems and multiple, frequently changing medications. Deterioration was often attributed to 'getting old' rather than becoming more unwell, and little evidence of future care planning was described.

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Prepared by Richard Kitchen, on behalf of the APM Science Committee

The Association for Palliative Medicine of Great Britain & Ireland