

The Role of Volunteers in Quality Palliative Care Delivery

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Abstract : Introduction: Here in India almost 75% of cancer patient die a sad death of neglect due to lack of awareness about palliative care and low economic level. Surveys in India show that two third of cancer patient do not get proper care during the terminal phase of their life. Palliative care through volunteers can make a significant difference in this respect. Objective: To identify and try to solve, to the extent possible, the main difficulties in giving palliative care to the terminal cancer patients of the area. And evaluate the impact of volunteer's direct care of palliative patients and their families. Methods: Feedback from patients and their relatives regarding the palliative care they receive from nursing home and from volunteers and compare the two. Also feedback from volunteers regarding their positive and negative experience while delivering palliative care service. Then evaluate the data to compare and improve the quality of service. Results: We carried out two studies. One study was undertaken in nursing home palliative care and another was in home setting by volunteers. Both studies were in adult palliative care services. Since January 2015, 496 cases were studied to enquire about their experience in both home based care and nursing home care. Both the studies fulfilled our quality appraisal criteria. One found that those families and patients who received home visits from volunteers were significantly more satisfied. The study highlighted the value of the role of volunteers in better satisfaction of patients and their families. Conclusions: Further research is needed to evaluate the role of volunteers in palliative care and how it can be delivered appropriately and effectively. We also wish to compare our findings with similar studies elsewhere.

Keywords : palliative care, terminal care, cancer, home care

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