



STRENGTHENING A PALLIATIVE APPROACH IN LONG-TERM CARE (SPA-LTC) PROJECT

RESEARCH BRIEF

"Now I don't have to guess": Using Pamphlets to encourage residents and families/friends to engage in advance care planning in long-term care

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BACKGROUND

- Advance care planning (ACP) helps individuals with progressive, life-limiting illnesses communicate their preferences for end-of-life (EOL) care to family members and healthcare providers
- Despite known benefits, ACP is rarely utilized in LTC settings
- To address the barriers of ACP in LTC, our team developed, implemented, and evaluated the effects of disease-specific illness trajectory pamphlets (ITPs) for five life-limiting advanced clinical syndromes of high prevalence in LTC: dementia, heart failure, COPD, renal failure, and frailty

RESEARCH TOPIC

- To explore whether ITPs for five conditions with high prevalence in long-term care (LTC) can help support resident and family engagement in ACP

METHODOLOGY

- Mixed methods design of 57 survey responses and deliberations from 7 focus groups with 56 LTC residents and families that explored: (a) reactions to the pamphlets, (b) if pamphlet use supports ACP engagement, and (c) when and how the pamphlets should be distributed

KEY FINDINGS

- Pamphlets encouraged residents and families to think about personal values and goals of care (84%) clarified what to ask (70%), and increased their comfort talking about EOL (63%)
- Speaking about these issues regarding ACP with family members (56%) or health providers (37%) was less common

CONCLUSION

- Findings suggest that the pamphlets provided opportunities to prompt reflection about EOL topics for residents and families
- However, our findings further suggested that an important component of ACP activation is staff follow-up; simply by re-asking families to discuss what the pamphlets made them feel can provide the residents and family to openly and honestly discuss concerns or fears and their loved one's EOL care

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