



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

RESEARCH BRIEF

Exploring the End-of-Life Care and Bereavement Needs of Family Members in Long-Term Care Homes

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BACKGROUND

- A key component of palliative care provision in long-term care (LTC) homes is supporting family members during their loved one's illness and end-of-life (EOL) care experience, which includes bereavement care

RESEARCH TOPIC

- To explore the EOL care and bereavement needs of family members whose loved ones have recently died in a LTC home

METHODOLOGY

- We led semi-structured interviews with 16 bereaved family members across four Canadian LTC homes
- Participants were asked about their loved one's EOL care, resources to support their bereavement needs, and recommendations to support the needs of others in LTC
- Interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic content analysis in order to determine key themes related to family members' EOL care and bereavement needs

KEY FINDINGS

- Three key themes were observed: (1) the LTC home's responsiveness to the residents' and family members' EOL care experience, (2) current and suggested resources to support their needs, and (3) specific support needs around ongoing care
- Bereaved family members perceived staff's responsiveness through caring actions directed towards the resident and family and attending to their comfort
- Some family members identified that the current EOL care information resources for planning and providing comfort were perceived as an area for improvement and, for this, staff could be more responsive by providing more social communication support

CONCLUSION

- Although the experiences of bereaved family members can inform a general approach and creation of informational resources, individualized assessment is still needed as bereavement support is unique to each resident and their family