Identifying Unmet Palliative Care Needs Among Hospitalized Patients with COPD

Arrix Ryce
Katherine Courtright, MD, MS; Beth Cooney, MPH; Scott Halpern, MD, PhD
SUMR Program Symposium
18 August 2017
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

15 million
Americans

#3
Cause of Death

20%

5 days
Average Length of Stay

$6 billion
Annual Cost

Hospitalized Patients over 40 years old

specialized medical care for seriously ill individuals and their families that provides relief from symptoms and stress at any age and at any stage in a serious illness
Rapid Growth of Hospital-based Palliative Care Programs

Among U.S. hospitals ≥50 beds

78% increase in annual hospital admissions seen by palliative care team

Center to Advance Palliative Care; Dumanovsky et al. J Palliat Med, 2016.
Inadequate Palliative Care Delivery for Patients with Advanced COPD

- Uncontrolled dyspnea, anxiety, and depression
- Reduced quality of life
- Substantial suffering during a prolonged functional decline
- Lower likelihood of palliative care referrals


Objective: To determine clinicians’ perceptions of excess consult demand and current consult-limiting strategies employed by programs

Method: Qualtrics anonymous web-based survey (~5 minutes)

Sample population: American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine

Domains of Interest
- Clinician, program, & consult characteristics
- Perception of consult volume
- Consult-limiting strategies
Palliative Care Consults Per Day

Number of consults per day

Total | Follow-up | New

0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50
Management of Palliative Care Consult Volume

- Triage consults based on perceived priority: 56.6%
- Divide consults among team members: 53.9%
- Hire additional staff members: 42.1%
- Reduce length of follow-up for established consults: 40.1%
- Encourage informal consultations: 18.2%
- Defer consults to outpatient consult services: 15.4%
- Set a cap on the number of consults accepted: 9.5%
- Implement a back-up system for capacity surges: 8.3%
Characterizing the Palliative Care Needs of Hospitalized COPD Patients

**Objective:** To understand the palliative care needs of hospitalized patients with COPD, their perceptions of palliative care, and their preferences for different approaches to address their needs

**Method:** Semi-structured interviews (~25-30 minutes)

**Sample population:** Hospitalized patients with COPD within the University of Pennsylvania Health System
Identifying the Needs of COPD Patients

1. Develop a semi-structured interview guide.
2. Interview hospitalized patients with COPD and their caregivers.
3. Analyze interview transcripts.
4. Identify common themes.
Domains of Interest

UNMET PALLIATIVE CARE NEEDS

KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTIONS OF PALLIATIVE CARE

ACCEPTANCE OF SPECIALTY PALLIATIVE CARE
Domains of Interest

UNMET PALLIATIVE CARE NEEDS

How much do you suffer from physical symptoms such as pain, shortness of breath, fatigue, or nausea?

Do you ever feel anxious or depressed about your illness?

Do you feel the medical care you are receiving fits with your goals? Have you shared those goals with your doctors?
Domains of Interest

KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTIONS OF PALLIATIVE CARE

What is your familiarity with palliative care?

How would you define it?

I’m hearing you use the word hospice, is this interchangeable with palliative care for you or do you see a distinction?
Provide participants with a consensus definition of specialty *palliative care*.

*specialized medical care for seriously ill individuals and their families* that provides *relief from symptoms and stress* at any age and at any stage in a serious illness.
Domains of Interest

ACCEPTANCE OF SPECIALTY PALLIATIVE CARE

Would this kind of care be helpful for COPD patients who are experiencing some of the symptoms and feelings we’ve discussed today?

Would you want this kind of care for your family and friends? For yourself?

Can you imagine a time when you would not want this kind of care?
Identifying the Needs of COPD Patients

1. Develop a semi-structured interview guide.
2. Interview hospitalized patients with COPD and their caregivers.
3. Analyze interview transcripts.
4. Identify common themes.
Future Directions

Perform a cross-sectional survey to determine the frequency and intensity of palliative care needs among hospitalized patients with COPD.

Develop a natural language processing (NLP) classifier of unmet palliative care needs among hospitalized patients with COPD using electronic health records (EHR).

Describe the epidemiology of patients with COPD and unmet palliative care needs during a hospitalization and the palliative care consultation practices utilized among these patients.
Lessons Learned

Utility of mixed-methods research approaches

Delivery of palliative care

Data analysis and visualization using Stata

Complexity of medical decision-making

Synthesis and translation of academic literature
Acknowledgments

Additional staff and research affiliates of the Palliative and Advanced Illness Research (PAIR) Center
Questions?