Family Conferences in Palliative Care: A Survey of Health Care Providers in France

Filbet M, Barberet C., Ruer M. Font -Truchet C., Vallet F. Rhondali W.
CHU LYON Hospices Civils de Lyon FRANCE
objectives

- This study describes the current practices of family conferences in palliative care units in France.
Methods.

- A cross-sectional descriptive 43-question survey was sent to each palliative care unit in France (N=113).
- Members of the interdisciplinary health care team
  - palliative care physician,
  - nurse,
  - psychologist,
  - social worker
Results.

- 276 of 452 responses (61%) of the health care team in 91 units (81%).

- Respondents completed physicians (n=225; 82%), nurses (n=219; 79%), psychologists (n=181; 66%).

- 272 of 276 health care providers (99%) reported conducting family conferences.

- Only 13 participants (5%) reported that they followed a structured protocol.
Population n=276

- Age: years; mean (SD) 44 (11)
- Female 225 (82)
- Experience in palliative care: years; mean (SD) 6 (6)
  - Physician 86 (31)
  - Nurse 91 (33)
  - Psychologist 57 (21)
  - Social worker 42 (15)
- Location of work
  - Academic medical center 72 (26)
  - General hospital 131 (47)
  - Regional hospital 24 (9)
  - Nursing home 50 (18)
Results: why?

• The 3 main goals
  
• to allow family members to express their feelings (n=240; 87%),

• identify family caregivers (n=233; 84%),

• discuss the patient’s plan of care (n=219; 79%).
Results. indication?

- the patient’s illness was terminal ($n=216$; 78%)
- family caregivers requested a conference ($n=208$; 75%)
- terminal sedation was required ($n=189$; 69%).
- primary indications and goals for a family conference were significantly different among the four health care disciplines.
Results. Who is invited?

- 452 health care providers (38%) reported that patients were not invited to participate.
- Full participation 44 (17%)
- Partial participation 123 (45%)
When?

- The 48h after admission for Physician
- After for Social worker and psychologist
discussion

- primary indications and goals for a family conference were significantly different among the four health care disciplines
- Ethical issue about the patient participation

- Yennurajalingam and all J palliat med 2008;11:1208-1211
- Dev R and al la prospective study of family conference: effects of patient presence on emotional expression and end of life discussion Pain Symptom Manage 2013;46:5,536-545
CONCLUSIONS

- Need for a implementation of guidelines about family conference
- More research

- Hudson and all: family meeting in palliative care: multidisciplinary clinical practice guideline. BMC Palliat Care 2008;7:12
- Hannon and all: measuring the family meeting in a specialist inpatient palliative care unit. Palliat Support Care 2012;10:43-49