

Consensus on quality indicators to assess the organisation of palliative cancer and dementia care applicable across national healthcare systems and selected by international experts

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Mrs. White

- Diagnosed with breast cancer.
- Received an operation, chemotherapy and radiation.
- Cancer is under control, but she cannot be cured anymore.

During an appointment with her physician, Mrs. White spontaneously expresses that she is experiencing a lot of pain. Subsequently, her physician asks her to rate the pain on a scale from 1-10. Mrs. White responds: "9". Mrs. White was prescribed opiates.



This physician, treated 10 patients similar to Mrs. White. All with similar diagnosis, treatment and pain complaints. Only because Mrs. White spontaneously stated she was in pain, she was asked to describe her pain. This physician therefore didn't structurally use a validated tool to assess the patients' pain. A quality indicator can be used to assess and improve this.

Introduction

- A 'gap' exists between the scientific evidence regarding best practices in palliative care and its use.
- Quality indicators can be used to assess the current performance of palliative care, in order to identify areas for improvement.
- Currently, many quality indicators have been developed, but few are being used.
- Thereby, there are very few quality indicators about the organisation of care.
- Even though, a well organized health care team is an essential requirement to improve patient care.
- The quality indicators that are used, are primarily used for judgmental purposes: health insurers assessing organisations by number of patients per condition.
- Seldomly, assessment of quality indicators is followed by quality improvements.

Current study

- The quality indicators of the IMPACT project have been composed by a multidisciplinary, international group of experts.
- The quality indicators were established following a thorough development process.
- The quality indicators are not only applicable for cancer, but also for other diseases, such as dementia.
- The quality indicators have been developed for internal quality improvement purposes.
- Using quality indicators for judgmental purposes will make them unfit for quality improvements.

Recommendations

- ➔ Facilitate nation wide implementation.
- ➔ Use quality indicators to initiate quality improvements.

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