

A survey of attitudes towards Palliative Medicine amongst Doctors working in the ED

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This survey is part of “**The Three Rs**” project of integrating Palliative Care and Emergency Department care. The project was funded by the Irish Hospice Foundation.

It aims to assess the perception of Palliative Medicine, understanding of patient palliative care needs, behaviour in practice, previous training and preferred educational modalities amongst ED doctors.

A survey was distributed to 34 medical staff with 68% response rate. All replies were anonymous.

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Recognition

Advance Care Directive

19/21 felt this would be helpful.

Medical care to a dying patient

54.5% rated their ability as good, 27.3% as fair and 18.2% as poor

Barriers to involvement of Pall Med

Overcrowding 100%,
Lack of privacy 96%, Time 2.5%,
Out of hours presentation 10%.

R

Response

Focus of care in ED

41% of staff felt the ED was the place to provide aggressive medical care. The remainder disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Communication skills

The majority felt they were good at communicating bad news to Patients and families.

Difficult Ethical End of Life issues

5/22 rated their ability as good in handling these, 68% fair, 4.5% poor.

R

Reflection

Education and Training

4/21 had previous training in Pall. Medicine.
14/19 identified pain management as an important educational topic. There was a preference for case presentations and workshops as educational modalities.

The Future

Almost universally, the doctors favoured increased availability of Palliative Medicine in the ED, guidelines for referral and making protocols available for management of palliative patients. 91% felt they would benefit from further education and training.

References available on request

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