

An Analysis of Documents Guiding Palliative Care in Five Canadian Provinces

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BACKGROUND

- Consistent guidelines and policies have the potential to improve quality of life in residents living in long-term care (LTC) settings by standardizing and promoting comprehensiveness in palliative care

RESEARCH TOPIC

- To analyze the extent of palliative content across high-level guiding documents related to the care of persons residing in Canadian LTC homes

METHODOLOGY

- The "Square of Care" framework was used to systematically determine the extent of palliative care content in guiding national and provincial documents

KEY FINDINGS

- 25 documents were included from the 273 documents identified in the systematic search (48% nationally-oriented documents and 24% Ontario-specific)
- Social issues, psychological issues, loss, and grief were the most commonly addressed "Square of Care" domains, while disease, end-of-life, and death management were addressed the least

CONCLUSION

- There was a lack of consistent and comprehensive palliative content across all analyzed documents, including those that were LTC-specific
- The lack of this content within professional and government organizations may lead to the misinterpretation of the principles and guidelines that pertain to the palliative approach
- There is a significant need for the development of LTC-specific palliative care guidelines across Canada