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PALLIATIVE CARE EXPERIENCE, EDUCATION AND EDUCATION NEEDS OF AGED RESIDENTIAL CARE CLINICAL STAFF

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INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand Palliative Care Strategy has identified a: "scanty provision of palliative care in institutional settings for the care of older people and those with degenerative conditions" (MOH, 2002). Interviews with hospital clinical staff conducted for a Health Research Council/Auckland District Health Board partnership project, pinpointed a lack of formal palliative care training among aged residential care (ARC) staff as a potential contributor to inappropriate hospital admissions of residents from ARC facilities.

The objectives of the present study are to examine the palliative care related: experience, education and education needs of clinical staff working within the aged residential care setting.

METHODS

A purposive sample of clinical staff members (392) across 52 ARC facilities in one district health board were surveyed regarding their palliative care experience and education.

RESULTS

Early results (n = 164) indicate that on average the clinical staff rated the quality of care provided to people who die in their facility as either "very good" (36%) or "excellent" (29%). The majority of participants reported that between 1-25% of the residents that they cared for would have been eligible for end-of-life care. However, slightly over half (46%) of respondents reported formal palliative care training. In contrast, the majority (80%) of respondents answered that they would like formal training.

CONCLUSION

Although preliminary, the findings indicate both the need and desire for formal palliative care education among ARC clinical staff. The results of the study should be utilised to inform the design and delivery of future palliative care education programmes within ARC to successfully meet the needs of all clinical staff.

REFERENCE

Ministry of Health. *Health of older people strategy*. (2002) Retrieved April 16, 2012, from <http://www.moh.govt.nz>.