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Personal Support Workers Perspective on Palliative Care in Long Term Care.

Kelley, Mary Lou; Wolfson, Sheldon; Bédard, Michel; Brazil, Kevin; Kaasalainen, Sharon; McAiney, Carrie; Chow, Paulina; Sevean, Pat; Sims-Gould, Joanie; Vis, Jo-Ann; Wiersma, Elaine

Background

Long term care (LTC) homes are a major site of death in Canada. However, most LTC homes lack a formalized palliative care (PC) program to care for residents living with life-limiting or chronic illnesses. Personal support workers (PSWs) play a vital role in the care of long term care residents.

Objectives

The goal is to examine the role of personal support workers in providing PC in LTC.

Methods

Participatory action research methods have been implemented in four Ontario LTC homes.

Results

The PSWs identified there are clear education needs surrounding providing culturally competent care and PC best practices. Interprofessional communication was seen as a key challenge and also communicating with families about death and dying. PSWs show strong team work within their discipline and are resident focused.

Discussion

There are over 30 national and international researchers and 40 community organizations partnered in this project. These partners will work collaboratively to establish educational and practical interventions in order to support the PSWs in providing PC. The end result an evidence-based toolkit for developing PC for LTC homes that can be applied nationally.

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