

## Journal Watch – Goals of Care Discussion – April 2018

**Article:**

Managing Bias in Palliative Care: Professional Hazards in Goals of Care Discussions at the End of Life

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**Review:**

**Strengths:** No studies have addressed bias or bias management specific to the activity of discussing goals of care at the end of life. The study focused on goals of care discussions, to allow easier depiction of biases. Prospective study. All interviews were conducted by first author, and coded by first author. The transcripts were then coded by the second author independently. This study described three frequent biases, that will allow palliative practitioners to reflect on their practice and decision making.

**Weaknesses:** This was a very small study, with only 20 practitioners interviewed. All were from the same state. Also, practitioner's self-reported biases, thus the list may not be inclusive. Biases would only include extrinsic biases, and not intrinsic ones (ones that we are not aware of).

**Relevance to Palliative Care:** Bias in medical management exists in a variety of situations, but has been less discussed in the palliative realm. It is important to consider practitioner biases in decisions made in palliative care. This study highlighted some potential biases that practitioners may have in goals of care discussions, as well as management plan for those biases. Recognizing these biases in all aspects of palliative medicine will aid to avoid both over and under treatment.