

Journal Watch – Palliative Care at Home & Administration – July 2018

Article:

The views of homeless people and healthcare professionals on palliative care and the desirability of setting up a consultation service: a focus group study.

Klop HT, van Dongen SI, Francke AL, de Veer AJE, Rietjens JAC, Gootjes JRG, Onwuteaka-Philipsen BD

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Review:

Strengths: Narrative study can provide greater insight into complex issues. The study used sound methods to analyze its qualitative data using COREQ guidelines. Homeless population recruited had a variety of life-limited illnesses (ex. COPD, cancer, liver problems, infections).

Weaknesses: Dutch-based study. Our Canadian homeless populations and challenges they face may significantly differ. Our professional practices styles may differ as well. Small numbers in sampling (n = 19 for professionals; n = 15 for homeless people) only provide limited views. Focus groups also require a willing sample to participate, which lends itself to selection bias. Focus groups may also be an intimidating environment for people to share their experiences openly.

Relevance to Palliative care: Examination of psychosocial factors that affect both the homeless population in accessing palliative care and health professionals in providing good care for a complex population. Provides practitioners food-for-thought on how to approach caring for a homeless individual near end of life, and the psychosocial, cultural, and access barriers they face when accessing care.