

Journal Watch – Communication – July 2018

Article:

How should we talk about palliative care, death and dying? A qualitative study exploring perspectives from caregivers of people with advanced cancer.

Collins A, McLachlan SA and Philip J.

Palliative Medicine, 2018; 32(4): 861-869

Article link: DOI: 10.1177/0269216317746584

Review:

Strengths

- Practical suggestions for communication strategies based on family caregivers' experiences
- Transparent study design that could be replicated

Weaknesses

- Single centre study (tertiary urban centre) focusing on oncology patients only
- No discussion of potential cultural differences and needs
- Possible self-selection bias
- Retrospective recollection of experience which may be influenced by recall bias

Relevance to Palliative Care: Communication interactions with patients and family members present substantial challenges for health care professionals in palliative care and at end of life. Obtaining family members' perspectives of these interactions can be helpful in better understanding individual needs. The caregiver recommendations in this study provide a preliminary framework for how to undertake difficult conversations. Further research involving patient perspectives and non-oncology settings is warranted.