

Journal Watch – Dignity Therapy – October 2017

Article:

Effect of dignity therapy on end-of-life psychological distress in terminally ill Portuguese patients: A randomized controlled trial.

Julião M, Oliveira F, Nunes B, Carneiro AV, Barbosa A.

Palliative Support Care. 2017 Feb 7:1-10.

Article link: DOI: [10.1017/S1478951516001140](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478951516001140)

Review:

Strengths:

- DT format used in study easily reproducible in clinical setting
- Clear inclusion and exclusion criteria
- DT sessions performed by same physician, and transcriptions from sessions were vetted for fidelity and protocol adherence by second physician

Weaknesses:

- Non-blinded study (primary and secondary investigators, and patients were not blinded)
- No data regarding validity and reliability of scoring systems for DS and DfD available
- Participants were all Portuguese and primarily Catholic, unable to assess applicability to other ethnic backgrounds and religions/spirituality

Relevance to Palliative Care:

Dignity Therapy is a psychotherapy method that can be administered in a short time period with benefit to patients, as well as loved ones who receive the legacy document. Focus on respect, purpose, and value of the individual. Particular benefit shown in patients with higher level of dignity-related distress. DT developed by Canadian (Dr. Chochinov).