

## Doctors' training and knowledge in end of life care: case study of three mission hospitals in Kenya.

### Background

There is an increasing number of people in Kenya with life limiting illnesses secondary to HIV/AIDS, cardiovascular diseases and cancer. Patients who suffer from these illnesses require palliative and end of life care. In developed countries such care is often given in a hospice or at home by palliative service professionals. In Kenya, there are limited such resources and therefore this care frequently ends up being offered by inpatient healthcare professionals spear-headed by doctors.

### Objectives

To assess doctors' previous training in end of life care, and to assess doctors' knowledge regarding end of life care.

### Methodology

A descriptive cross-sectional survey utilizing a questionnaire was administered to doctors working in three mission hospitals in Kenya.

### Results

The response rate was 59.2%. Forty percent of the respondents had not had any end of life care training as part of their undergraduate curriculum. For those who had received training only 26% had received bedside training.

End of life care knowledge was positively associated with having received both lectures and bedside teaching ( $p=0.001$ ) as an undergraduate as well as having undergone further training in end of life care at postgraduate level ( $p=0.046$ ).

Other factors associated with a higher knowledge in end of life care were: older age ( $p=0.008$ ), seniority ( $p=0.000$ ), medical specialty ( $p=0.029$ ), having trained in a developed country ( $p=0.000$ ) and having >10 years clinical experience ( $p=0.004$ ).

### Conclusion

Nearly half of doctors working in three mission hospitals in Kenya had never received any form of undergraduate training in end of life care. Those clinicians who had received more intensive end of life care training appeared to have a greater knowledge of end of life care management. Curriculum reviewers should incorporate end of life care as part of training for all doctors. The training should include both lectures and bedside tutorial.

### Keywords

end of life care, palliative care, terminal illness, knowledge, training, doctors

**Primary author:** MUNG'ARA, David (Department of Family Medicine)

**Track Classification:** Emerging and re-emerging diseases