

Palliative Competence in emergency medicine

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SAŽETAK:

Emergency cases in nursing homes are challenging for emergency doctors as there are many palliative patients among the residents. Hence, emergency doctors have to make a decision balancing the devises of “saving life” and “increasing quality of life”. Issues of palliative medicine are not part of the education of emergency doctors. Only little is known about the experiences of emergency doctors, their understanding of decision making in such situations and potential measures for improving the situation. In an exploratory study 160 emergency doctors from all Austrian provinces (except for Vienna) were surveyed about their subjective experiences regarding emergency incidents in nursing homes: What information is available in the nursing home, which information would be helpful for decision making, and what impedes emergency deployments. Mostly, emergency doctors can draw on medication lists and nursing staff’s information, more rarely general practitioners’ information as well as advance directives are available. This very information would be helpful though to make a clear decision. Hospital admissions are only avoidable if sufficient symptom control and care are provided in the nursing home. Emergency doctors with longer professional experience are more likely to refrain from relocating residents to hospital. Insufficient staff resources, fragmentary presence of general practitioners and the absence of advance directives impede emergency deployment in nursing homes. The implementation of advance care planning, training in the field of palliative medicine for emergency doctors and general practitioners as well as information on legal and ethical aspects for nursing home staff and relatives are being suggested.

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