

Improving End-of-Life Care Provision by Ambulance Services A Systematic Literature Review

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INTRODUCTION

- Responding to the needs of patients at the end-of-life can present challenges for the ambulance service
- Facing increasing demand, complexity of patient care needs and a desire to avoid unnecessary transfers to the emergency department, local ambulance services have developed initiatives to help improve the care provided to this patient group
- This systematic literature review aimed to answer 3 questions;
 1. What initiatives have been developed to improve end-of-life care provision and how do they work?
 2. What evidence exists to demonstrate the effectiveness of these initiatives?
 3. What are people's experiences of care where these initiatives are in place?
- Searches of MEDLINE, CINAHL, ASSIA, Embase and grey literature were undertaken to identify articles published in the last 10 years
- A total of 4,276 records were reviewed with 58 included in the final narrative synthesis

Q1

11 types of initiative were described across the 58 sources included in the review

A three domain theoretical framework was developed describing the underlying mechanism of how initiatives improved care



1. Aiding decision making



2. Providing effective therapy



3. Providing the appropriate response to calls

Q2

Eight of the included studies contained evidence of initiative effectiveness



Three studies showed improvements in patient care:

- More shared care records
- Treatment in accordance with care plan
- Higher proportion of community deaths – it was implied that this was preferable, but analysis including preferred place of death was not available



Five studies showed improved staff confidence before and after education programmes

Q3

Four of the included studies explored people's experiences



All four studies contained feedback from ambulance personnel



Only two studies captured the patient or relative voice

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Numerous initiatives have been developed to improve pre-hospital end-of-life care delivered by ambulance services
- The evidence to show the impact of these initiatives on patient outcomes is currently limited
- Further research to understand the patient experiences of care would be beneficial to inform the ongoing development of initiatives

WHAT NEXT?

- Ethical approval has been obtained for an in-depth qualitative study exploring the experiences of 20 patients (and/or their relatives) when receiving end-of-life care from the ambulance service
- The aim is to describe the factors that contribute to reports of both good and bad experiences of care and explore how this knowledge can be used to improve end-of-life provision by the ambulance service