Assessing changes in attitudes of Medical oncologists towards purview and practice of Palliation – a comparison of surveys disseminated over time

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Surveys were conducted during my training in All India Institute of Medical oncology, New Delhi and Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, Bangalore.

Background

The amount of progress achieved over time may be measured by changes in attitudes of specialists who may be expected to engage directly with indications for referral (given the population of advanced cancer patients who are candidates for palliation under their car). Responses could also provide important clues with the ability to determine the level of coordination between medical oncology and palliative medicine.

Methodology

Comparison of results of Questionnaire based survey carried out at two tertiary care centers three years apart.

Results

Respondents in the integrated setting providing palliation supported the provision of patient centered care (as defined by ESMO), while those in the standalone setting demonstrated a deeper allegiance to core principles of palliation. An increasing number of respondents believed that place of provision determined the difference between supportive and palliative care provision. A growing perception that supportive care services were being provided in the Medical oncology ward was also noticed. Majority of respondents continued to believe that pain medication and supportive care services were major indication for seeking a consultation liaison. The agreement on including medical oncology topics directly within the palliative curriculum and conceptual suitability of providing supportive care within the ambit of palliation was sustained. A reduction in the support for advanced care directives for deciding aggressiveness of care was seen. There seems to be a lack of clarity in their support for inclusion of management of medical issues within scope of palliation.

Conclusion

Differences in attitudes underline the inherent differences in these academic models.