

TESTING A FAMILY PAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (FPMP) FOR CAREGIVERS OF CANCER PATIENTS: A RANDOMISED CLINICAL TRIAL

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Background: Increasingly, advanced cancer patients are receiving care in the community supported by families and hospice home care services. However, little or no preparation is provided to family caregivers who assume this supportive role, often 24 hours per day. Pain management is consistently identified by family caregivers as their primary concern related to care and support of a loved one with cancer.

Objectives: This paper describes Phase III of a three-phase program of research to develop and test pain management interventions that will provide family caregivers of cancer patients with information and skills to manage the patient's pain.

Design and Methods: Phase I involved the development of a family pain management program for this group of families using relevant literature and qualitative methods to elicit information about the components of a pain education program that would be helpful to families. The FPMP consists of 4 sequenced, interactive education sessions, a Daily Comfort Diary and a video. In Phase II the FPMP was pilot tested to determine the extent to which the instruments were sensitive and psychometrically sound. Phase III involved a randomised clinical trial to test the intervention with a stratified random sample of 130 family caregivers.

Results: Preliminary analysis shows statistically significant improvement in the family caregivers' knowledge and experience of and attitudes to cancer pain management over time.

Conclusion: Findings demonstrate the effectiveness of this simple home based intervention to improve pain management in this cancer population.