

## CANCER PATIENTS DYING IN NURSING HOMES: WHO ARE THEY?

Marit S Jordhoy, Ingvild Saltvedt, Peter Fayers, Jon Håvard Loge, Marianne Ahlner-Elmqvist, Stein Kaasa  
Unit of Applied Clinical Research, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway

Although a considerable number of cancer patients die in nursing homes, these patients have been poorly described. The purpose of this study was to define sociodemographic, medical and health related quality of life (HRQL) characteristics associated with subsequent death in nursing homes.

The study sample included 395 advanced cancer patients who participated in a trial of palliative care, 260 (66%) patients died in hospital, 80 (20%) at home and 55 (14%) in nursing homes. HRQL were measured monthly using the EORTC QLQ-C30 questionnaire. Logistic regression was used for the analyses.

Death in nursing home was associated with older age, not living with spouse and poor performance status.

Overall, patients dying in nursing homes reported poorer functioning, more fatigue and appetite loss compared to those dying elsewhere. The association between death in nursing homes and poor physical, role, cognitive and social functioning remained significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) when sociodemographic and medical differences were taken into account.

The patients dying in nursing homes represented a cohort of frail elderly with severe functioning impairments, for whom there seems to be considerable room for improvement of care. Further research is needed to determine how this can be achieved, and to plan and provide the most appropriate palliative care services for such subgroups of cancer patients.