

Paramedics providing palliative care at home: A mixed-methods exploration of patient and family satisfaction and paramedic comfort and confidence

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Citation	Carter, A., Arab, M., Harrison, M., Goldstein, J., Stewart, B., Lecours, M., . . . Pereira, J. (2019). Paramedics providing palliative care at home: A mixed-methods exploration of patient and family satisfaction and paramedic comfort and confidence. <i>CJEM</i> , 21(4), 513-522.
DOI	doi:10.1017/cem.2018.497
Journal	CJEM
Abstract	<p>Objective Paramedics Providing Palliative Care at Home was launched in two provinces, including a new clinical practice guideline, database, and paramedic training. The aim of this study was to evaluate patient/family satisfaction and paramedic comfort and confidence.</p> <p>Methods In Part A, we gathered perspectives of patients/families via surveys mailed at enrolment and telephone interviews after an encounter. Responses were reported descriptively and by thematic analysis. In Part B, we surveyed paramedics online pre- and 18 months post-launch. Comfort and confidence were scored on a 4-point Likert scale, and attitudes on a 7-point Likert scale, reported as the median (interquartile range [IQR]); analysis with Wilcoxon ranked sum/thematic analysis of free text.</p> <p>Results In Part A, 67/255 (30%) enrolment surveys were returned. Three themes emerged: fulfilling wishes, peace of mind, and feeling prepared for emergencies. In 18 post-encounter interviews, four themes emerged: 24/7 availability, paramedic professionalism and compassion, symptom relief, and a plea for program continuation. Thematic saturation was reached with little divergence. In Part B, 235/1255 (18.9%) pre- and 267 (21.3%) post-surveys were completed. Comfort with providing palliative care without transport improved post launch ($p = < 0.001$) as did confidence in palliative care without transport ($p = < 0.001$). Respondents strongly agreed that all paramedics should be able to provide basic palliative care.</p> <p>Conclusions After implementation of the multifaceted Paramedics Providing Palliative Care at Home Program, paramedics describe palliative care as important and rewarding. The program resulted in high patient/family satisfaction; simply registering provides peace of mind. After an encounter, families particularly noted the compassion and professionalism of the paramedics.</p>
Link	https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/canadian-journal-of-emergency-medicine/article/paramedics-providing-palliative-care-at-home-a-mixedmethods-exploration-of-patient-and-family-satisfaction-and-paramedic-comfort-and-confidence/BEB994FF4D842F5D416E6DEB44B026CD