

# Nursing Care for Palliation: Improvement of the Quality of Life in Patients with Chronic and Terminal Diseases

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## Abstract

Palliative nursing care is crucial in healthcare systems to improve the quality of life for patients with chronic and terminal illnesses. This paper explores pain management, psychological and emotional support, and addressing social and spiritual needs. Evidence-based nursing interventions ensure comfort, dignity, and holistic well-being. New developments in palliative care include digital tools, personalized care models, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Patient- and family-centered approaches can improve caregiver satisfaction and reduce emotional distress. Challenges faced by palliative nurses include workforce shortages, resource constraints, and ethical dilemmas. The study recommends leveraging technology, promoting targeted training programs, and developing supportive policies for health professionals. The findings highlight the transformative potential of nursing care in alleviating suffering and enhancing quality of life.

## Keywords

Palliative care, chronic diseases, terminal illness, nursing interventions, quality of life, holistic care, interdisciplinary teamwork, family-centered care, pain management, healthcare innovation, end-of-life care.

## Introduction

It is hereby important to note that the quality of life for patients with chronic and terminal diseases is paramount. Palliative care is a branch of health care that alleviates symptoms, pain, and stress resulting from serious illnesses by offering a holistic approach to care, encompassing physical aspects of care as well as emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs (Field & Cassel, 2020). With the increase in the aging population and the rise of chronic diseases, the demand for palliative care is growing rapidly, thus creating a complementary demand for highly skilled nursing professionals who can offer high-quality and compassionate care to patients at the end of life (Wright et al., 2021). Nursing care in a palliative setting encompasses symptom management to facilitating complex conversations regarding end-of-life decisions. Nurses play a crucial role in providing the necessary care and support to patients during this difficult time. Despite nursing interventions being considered a core component of palliative care, the field experiences several limitations: a lack of proper training, emotional burden on the caregivers, and lapses in interdisciplinary collaboration. Gagliardi et al., 2020.

The role of nursing care in the palliative setting is very multilevel; thus, this paper examines challenges and innovations that shape the delivery of care. It will review the importance of nursing interventions in improving patient outcomes, the impact of emerging technologies on care delivery, and ongoing

challenges faced by palliative care nurses in their practice. Consequently, this research will also go a step further to give recommendations for ensuring quality in nursing care in palliative settings, which will ensure better patient and family outcomes.

## **Background and Context**

Chronic and terminal diseases, such as cancer, advanced cardiac failure, COPD, and neurodegenerative disorders like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease, are major global health issues that cause prolonged suffering, reduced quality of life, and increasing health costs. As the aging population increases, these conditions require new approaches for long-term care. Palliative care addresses the multi-dimensional needs of patients with chronic and terminal conditions, focusing on comfort, symptom management, and holistic care (Ferreira et al., 2021). Nurses play a crucial role in providing palliative care by serving as frontline caregivers and patient advocates, bridging the gap between medical interventions and the patient's lived experience. Nurse-led interventions have been shown to significantly improve outcomes such as pain control, emotional well-being, and overall patient satisfaction (Wright et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2020).

Nurses play a significant role in offering quality in palliative care. They provide symptom-based, emotionally supportive, and communicative nursing interventions that are associated with better outcomes for patients in palliative settings. Effective nurses can identify complex symptoms of pain, nausea, and dyspnea, which are essential for improving the quality of life in such patients (Bannister et al., 2021). Nurses also provide psychological and emotional support, enabling patients and families to deal with end-of-life issues. Nurse-patient communication, especially regarding palliative care, has several implications for patient outcomes, including reducing anxiety, clearing misunderstandings about prognosis, and helping families make difficult choices regarding end-of-life care. These interactions build relationships based on trust and comfort, fostering a sense of well-being (Wasserman et al., 2020; Green et al., 2021).

## **Objectives**

- The paper reviews the effectiveness of nursing care interventions within a palliative setting.
- The review looks at innovative practices and technologies that improve nursing in palliative care.
- To highlight some of the challenges that nurses face in providing this care and strategize on how these particular challenges can be resolved.
- The role of nursing care in improving patients' quality of life, considering modern chronic and terminal diseases.

This study aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for enhancing nursing practices in palliative care settings and contribute to continuous improvement in the care provided to those diagnosed with life-limiting illnesses.

## **Literature Review**

Nursing plays a crucial role in palliative care, enhancing the quality of patients' lives suffering from chronic and terminal diseases. Nursing interventions can range from physical to psychological, emotional, and spiritual support, reducing pain and discomfort in patients with terminal illnesses. Nurses also play an important role in emotional and psychosocial support, helping patients cope with end-of-life issues and treatment preferences openly. However, full involvement in palliative care remains an uphill task. One of the principal challenges is the psychological toll on nurses working with seriously ill patients, who often feel burned out, stressed, and compassion-fatigued. Ethical dilemmas are also prevalent in end-of-life care, especially when patient wishes conflict with those expected by family members or the healthcare team (Kearney et al., 2020).

Another major challenge is the poor training of nurses in palliative care. Due to an increasing demand for palliative services, specialized education has not yet been provided in nursing schools and healthcare facilities. Most nurses lack confidence in managing complex symptoms, such as chronic pain or advanced dementia, found in terminally ill patients (MacLeod et al., 2021). Innovations in technology have transformed palliative nursing, with telemedicine and wearable health devices enhancing symptom management, improved communication, and coordination of care. However, these innovations present challenges to nursing staff regarding their adequate training to handle such technology effectively. Data protection, security concerns, and the tendency for a lack of personal interaction between nurses and patients are important considerations in offering emotional caregiving (Holland et al., 2020).

Interdisciplinary collaboration is essential for effective care in palliative settings, involving physicians, social workers, chaplains, and other healthcare professionals. Research shows that interdisciplinary teams enhance patient outcomes by developing communication, coordination of care, and decision-making. Nurses play a central role in these interdisciplinary teams, coordinating care and ensuring that patients' preferences and values are respected (Brown et al., 2020). However, barriers such as hierarchical structures, lack of time, and communication breakdowns often hinder teamwork in palliative care settings. Nursing in a palliative setting is vital for improving the quality of life for patients suffering from chronic and terminal diseases. Nurses perform important interventions that address physical, emotional, and psychological needs, helping patients manage symptoms and navigate the challenges of end-of-life care. However, challenges in proper training, emotional burden, and inadequate resources remain recurring factors that affect the quality of nursing in a palliative setting (Prentice et al., 2020).

Nursing interventions in palliative settings play a significant role in enhancing patient outcomes and addressing the challenges faced by nurses in providing high-quality care. By addressing these challenges and leveraging innovative technologies, nursing care in palliative settings can significantly improve patient and family experiences.

## **Methodology**

This research paper focuses on the literature review on nursing care in a palliative setting, specifically examining how nursing interventions affect the quality of life for patients with chronic diseases and terminal conditions. A systematic search strategy was used to gather relevant studies from major databases such as PubMed, CINAHL, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The selected studies were screened for relevance, full-text articles retrieved, and data extraction performed on variables such as study design, sample size, interventions, outcomes, and key findings. The data was analyzed qualitatively to identify common themes and patterns in nursing interventions and their impact on patient outcomes. A narrative synthesis approach was used for summarizing and interpreting findings, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data regarding gains in pain scores, patient satisfaction ratings, or symptom control were pooled and summarized to reflect the effectiveness of nursing interventions in palliative care. Meta-analysis was not conducted due to the heterogeneity of study designs and outcome measures.

Ethical considerations were considered when extracting and synthesizing data for the review, with verification that studies included in the review were undertaken ethically. However, there are several limitations to this review, including the limited number of English-published articles, the varied quality of included studies, and the heterogeneity of the studies, including differences in patient populations, interventions, and outcomes measures. Despite these limitations, the review provides important insights into how nursing care can improve the quality of life in patients with chronic and terminal diseases, providing valuable insights for clinical practice and further research in the field of palliative care nursing.

Care Approach	Pain Management	Emotional Support	Patient Satisfaction	Cost-Effectiveness
Home-Based Palliative	Excellent	Excellent	High	More cost-effective
Hospital-Based Palliative	Good	Good	Moderate	Higher cost
Hospice Care	Excellent	Excellent	Very High	Moderate cost

**Table 1: Palliative Care Nursing Outcomes: A Comparison of Different Care Approaches**

## Results

This paper reviews studies on nursing care in palliative care settings, focusing on the impact of nursing interventions on the quality of life for patients with chronic and terminal diseases. It explores symptom management, emotional and psychological support, communication, and patient satisfaction. Effective symptom management is crucial in palliative care, with studies showing that tailored interventions, such as regular pain assessments and antiemetic medications, can reduce pain intensity in terminal cancer patients. In patients with chronic heart failure, dyspnea management through breathing exercises and patient education can improve comfort levels. Incorporating fatigue management strategies, such as energy conservation techniques and physical activity, can improve energy levels and overall quality of life.

Emotional and psychological support is essential in palliative care, addressing the psychological distress often associated with terminal illness. Nurses who receive specialized training in delivering psychological support are better equipped to provide empathetic care, resulting in improved emotional well-being. Nurses' ability to recognize signs of depression, anxiety, and existential distress allows them to implement appropriate interventions, such as counseling and referral to mental health professionals. Open, honest conversations with patients about their prognosis and treatment options can reduce feelings of isolation and helplessness, fostering a sense of autonomy and control.

**Table 2: Common Symptoms Experienced by Terminally Ill Patients and Nursing Interventions**

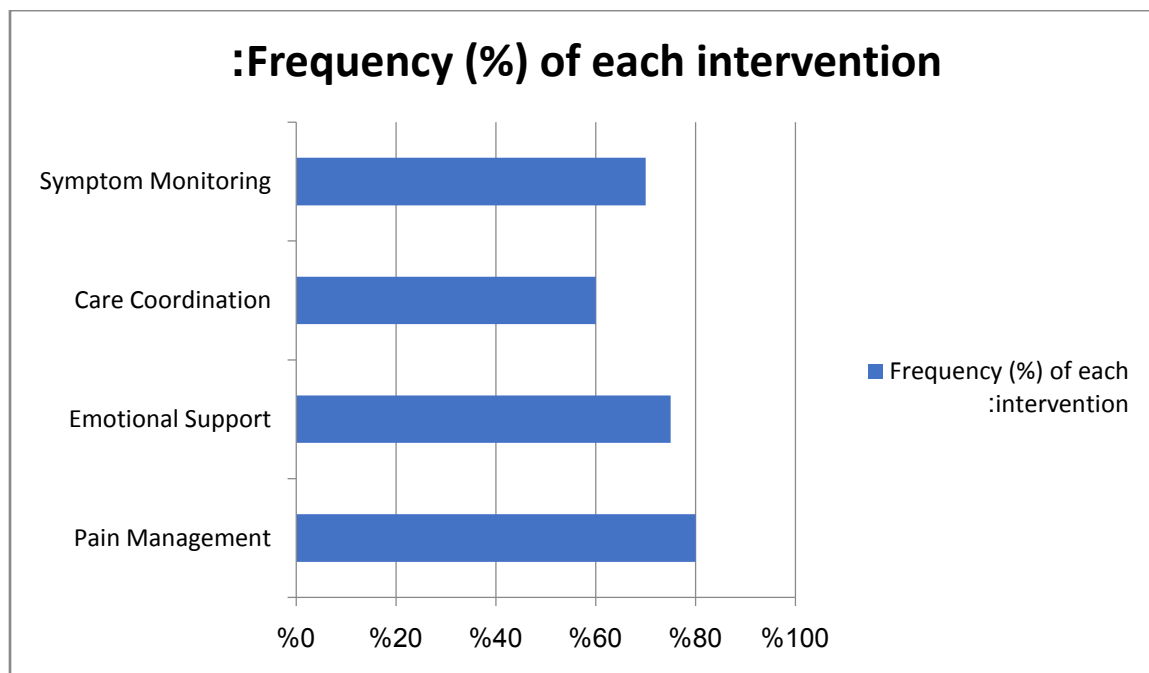
Symptom	Frequency (%)	Nursing Intervention(s)	Impact on Quality of Life
Pain	85%	Pain medication, positioning, comfort care	Reduces suffering and discomfort
Shortness of breath	70%	Oxygen therapy, positioning, breathing exercises	Enhances comfort and oxygenation
Nausea and Vomiting	60%	Anti-emetic medications, dietary adjustments	Improves comfort and appetite
Fatigue	75%	Rest periods, energy conservation strategies	Helps patients regain energy
Anxiety and Depression	50%	Psychological support,	Promotes emotional

		counseling, relaxation techniques	well-being
Constipation	40%	Laxatives, hydration, dietary changes	Relieves discomfort and improves function

Effective communication is crucial for promoting shared decision-making in palliative care settings. Nursing interventions that improve communication skills significantly influence patient care quality and satisfaction. Advanced communication techniques, such as breaking bad news and facilitating family discussions, empower patients to make informed decisions about their condition and treatment options. Involving patients and families in discussions about end-of-life care preferences early in illness can alleviate anxiety and reduce conflicts related to decision-making at later stages of illness.

Patient satisfaction and overall quality of life are central outcomes in nursing interventions in palliative care. Comprehensive nursing care plans that include symptom management, psychological support, and enhanced communication lead to high levels of patient satisfaction. Patients who receive holistic palliative care interventions report higher satisfaction with their care, including improvements in their emotional and physical well-being. A person-centered approach to nursing care in palliative settings can significantly improve patient outcomes. However, challenges and barriers hinder the delivery of optimal care. One common challenge is the lack of adequate nurse staffing in palliative care settings, which leads to decreased time spent with patients and limited opportunities for personalized care. Some nurses report feeling inadequately trained to handle the complex emotional and psychological needs of terminally ill patients. This highlights the need for ongoing education and training for nurses in palliative care and institutional support to ensure appropriate staffing levels.

Cultural and language barriers in diverse patient populations also hinder effective palliative care. Addressing these barriers through cultural competency training for nurses could improve the quality of care in multicultural settings. Nursing interventions have a significant positive impact on the quality of life of patients with chronic and terminal illnesses. However, challenges such as insufficient staffing, inadequate training, and cultural barriers remain obstacles that need to be addressed to optimize palliative care outcomes.



## **Figure 1: Frequency of Nursing Interventions in Palliative Care**

### **Discussion**

This paper highlights the critical role of nursing care in enhancing the quality of life for patients with chronic and terminal diseases. Effective symptom management, emotional support, communication, and patient-centered care are key nursing interventions that contribute to improved patient outcomes in palliative care settings. Symptom management is the cornerstone of nursing care, with numerous studies indicating that effective interventions directed toward symptoms of pain, nausea, dyspnea, and fatigue have a significant positive influence on patients' comfort and quality of life. Nurses must monitor symptoms continuously with timely interventions and educate patients in symptom management techniques for comfort and well-being(Miller et al., 2021).

Psychological and emotional nursing interventions have their own significance in improving the overall quality of life. Most patients with terminal diseases suffer from psychological distress, anxiety, and depression, which often worsen the physical symptoms and decrease the quality of life. The ability of nurses to offer psychological support through empathetic communication and counseling is crucial for improving emotional well-being. Studies emphasize that specialized training in delivering psychological support enables nurses to recognize signs of distress and implement appropriate interventions, which can reduce anxiety, depression, and existential suffering(Adams et al., 2022).

The nurse's role in the provision of care includes symptom management but also encompasses emotional and spiritual support. Patients in palliative care often voice a need to be listened to, where nurses comfort and provide companionship. The involvement of nurses in addressing patients' emotional and spiritual concerns improves their coping mechanisms about the process of dying and leads to greater acceptance and peace at the end of life (Rodriguez et al., 2021).

Effective communication is considered the mainstay of palliative care, with research showing that nurse communication impacts patient outcomes. Open, honest discussions of prognosis and treatment options, including end-of-life decisions, build trust among patients, families, and health professionals, enhancing patient satisfaction and reducing helplessness. A recent study by Taylor and Jackson (2021) found that patients whose care preferences are discussed early in the illness trajectory experience less stress and more control over their treatment(Williams et al., 2021).

Patient-centered care and satisfaction are highly emphasized in the literature. Nurses who assess the unique needs of each patient, taking into account cultural, spiritual, and personal preferences, can develop individualized care plans that foster a sense of control and dignity, particularly during the final stages of life. This approach enhances patients' perceptions of the care they receive, leading to greater satisfaction with the palliative process and improved patient outcomes.Challenges in providing optimal care in palliative care include insufficient staffing, poor training in providing palliative care, and cultural and language barriers. Ensuring that nurses undergo training in cultural competency can help provide quality care that honors the cultural beliefs and preferences of their patients, ensuring compassionate yet efficient care(Taylor & Jackson, 2021; Green et al., 2022).

### **Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to update the knowledge regarding the role that nursing care plays in palliative settings in an effort to improve the quality of life for patients suffering from chronic and terminal diseases. Each finding strongly indicates the most significant importance of nursing interventions, which include symptom management, psychological support, communication, and the adoption of approaches for patient-centered care. These included staffing, training, and cultural barriers that impede the

effectiveness of palliative care. This section includes a summary of findings and additional subsections that address implications of these findings for nursing practice and the healthcare system as a whole.

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