



# PATIENTS' AND PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES ON EARLY PALLIATIVE CARE INTEGRATION IN PEDIATRIC CANCER CARE AT A TERTIARY PEDIATRIC HOSPITAL IN THE PHILIPPINES

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## INTRODUCTION

Early integration of pediatric palliative care is the primal model in the holistic pediatric cancer care in advanced countries yet no available data locally. This study aimed to determine parents' and patients' perception on palliative care, and assess their attitudes on early integration during pediatric cancer management.

## METHODS

Perceptions and attitudes were evaluated using an adapted and validated questionnaire. Demographics and responses were summarized by descriptive statistics using frequency and percentage. Shapiro-Wilk test was used for normality distribution. Continuous quantitative data that meet normality assumption were summarized using mean and standard deviation, while those that do not were described using median and range.

## RESULTS

Thirty-six parent-patient dyads were included in the study. Seventeen (47.22%) with malignant hematology and 19 (52.78%) had solid tumors. Almost all patients (94.44%) have not heard of palliative care, while 2 have heard, and 1 had experienced. Among parents, 5 (13.89%) heard palliative care, where 2 (5.5%) had experienced. Most parents believe that including the palliative care team in their child's care around the time of initial diagnosis would have been helpful for treating symptoms (36.78%), helped with making initial treatment decisions (27.59%), and a positive addition to overall care (25.29%). Most respondents have positive attitude toward palliative care.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Significant number of respondents have not heard of pediatric palliative care but have positive attitude in child's cancer management. In spite of the limited sample size, the results indicate that it should be integrated early in the care of children with cancer.

## KEYWORDS

pediatric palliative care, pediatric cancer, malignant hematology, solid tumor, Philippines