

■ Hospice care reduces end-of-life hospitalizations

Reported by Susan Aldridge, PhD, medical journalist

Nursing home residents in hospices are less likely to be admitted to hospital for terminal care.

Hospice care generally focuses more upon the patient's comfort rather than aggressive treatment. Now a new report from Brown Medical School reveals that hospice care reduces admissions to hospital for terminal care. The study looked at nursing home residents receiving hospice care.

Many of these residents had cancer and were more likely to be white, female and married compared to residents not receiving hospice care. Location was also a factor; if the hospice was more than 15 miles away, residents were less likely to be receiving hospice care. In general, hospice care is seen as a good choice for terminal care - for hospitalization can have a negative impact on quality of life and may result in unnecessary expense. The researchers point out that 80 per cent of nursing homes can make arrangements for hospice care. But the option isn't always made available to those who might benefit. Family, residents, and carers might like to discuss the possibility of hospice care with the doctor, social worker or nursing home if they think it could be a good way of providing terminal care.

Source

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