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Introduction/Context

- ✓ Family carers play a key role in providing care to loved ones at home (National Carers Strategy, 2012).
- ✓ Support is required for family carers throughout and on cessation of that role (Argyle et al, 2010).
- ✓ Palliative care specifies the practical, coping, and bereavement needs of family members (WHO 2013).



➔ The IHF undertook a review of literature to provide direction for service initiatives in this area

Aims & Objective

Identify the needs of family carers caring for a person at the end of life

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Identify required responses to meeting the needs of family carers caring for a person at the end of life

Objective:

Provide direction for those involved in the care of a dying person being cared for by a family carer

Methods

A combination of the following key terms were entered on the databases Cinahl and Pubmed:

Palliative care
Family carers
End of life care

121 articles were reviewed and information was synthesised by identifying prominent themes. The themes to emerge are: **“General Support”**, **“Psychological Distress”**, and **“Decision Making”**



Findings:

General Support:



- Family carers are often undervalued and under represented in the literature.
- Support is required in the form of information, respite and financial assistance (McCarron et al, 2011).
- There is inequitable access to services (Brazil et al, 2011).



Psychological Distress:



- High amounts of isolation are experienced (McKernan, 2009).
- Significant losses and ambiguous loss is experienced throughout the illness trajectory and/ or on transition to a continuing care setting (Aoun et al, 2011).



Decision Making:



- Clarity around roles in decision making at the end of life is required (Ewing et al, 2012).



Indications:

- Carers needs should be assessed (Parker et al, 2007).
- Carers should be provided with practical information based on their needs (Aoun et al, 2012).
- Increased resources are required to provide adequate respite regardless of location (Uren & Graham, 2013).



- Assistance should be provided to assist family carers to identify and express their emotional needs (Marie Curie Cancer Care, 2014).
- Increased acknowledgement of the loss and bereavement experiences of family carers is required.

- One link person should liaise with the family to assist them in navigating their role and the health social system (Marie Curie Cancer Care, 2014).

