Dying with Dignity: The Power of Love

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Background

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FEAR + Community = Dignity in Death

LOVE + Community = Dignity in Death
Predicting Death in the Nursing Home: Development and Validation of the 6-Month Minimum Data Set Mortality Risk Index

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Abstract

Background. Currently, 24% of all deaths nationally occur in nursing homes making this an important focus of care. However, many residents are not identified as dying and thus do not receive appropriate care in the last weeks and months of life. The aim of our study was to develop and validate a predictive model of 6-month mortality risk using functional, emotional, cognitive, and disease variables found in the Minimum Data Set.

Methods. This retrospective cohort study developed and validated a clinical prediction model using stepwise logistic regression analysis. Our study sample included all Missouri long-term-care residents (43,510) who had a full Minimum Data Set assessment transmitted to the Federal database in calendar year 1999. Death was confirmed by death certificate data.

Results. The validated predictive model with a c-statistic of 0.75 included the following predictors: a) demographics (age and male sex); b) diseases (cancer, congestive heart failure, renal failure, and dementia/Alzheimer’s disease); c) clinical signs and symptoms (shortness of breath, deteriorating...
“I hope to be pain free and excited about the end. Knowing that these things don’t always work out, at minimum I hope Debbie is holding my hand and lying by my side. It would be great if I were aware of her presence and of others who may be surrounding me, but again, this may not be likely either. At least it feels good to think that it may happen this way.”

David B Oliver in Exit Strategy: Depriving Death of Its Strangeness
Community Support

Depriving Death of Its Strangeness

• Initiate discussions for a plan
• Warning shots about what to expect
• Assist with legacy suggestions

Find Things for Family “to do”

• Massage
• Music
• Scripture
Community Support

• Prepare the Environment
• Bring Food and Dine Together
• Proactively Call
• Introduce Technology for additional support
• Teach them How to Say Goodbye
  - Thank You
  - I Love You
  - We will be ok
To begin depriving death of its greatest advantage over us, let us adopt a way clean contrary to that common one; let us deprive death of its strangeness, let us frequent it, let us get used to it. . . We do not know where death awaits us: so let us wait for it everywhere. . . To practice death is to practice freedom. A man who has learned how to die has unlearned how to be a slave.

Michel de Montaigne
(1533 -1592)
A Final Word

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