

Occupational therapy for palliative cancer patients - a randomized controlled trial

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Introduction

Patients with advanced cancer often experience serious dysfunctions leading to problems with activities of daily living (ADL) and reduced quality of life. Palliative cancer patients tend to have many admissions to hospital, although they wish to stay at home. Occupational therapy (OT) is believed to be effective in handling many of the problems experienced by patients with advanced cancer, but the evidence is sparse.

Objectives

The aim of this study is to analyse the effects of an OT intervention for palliative cancer patients. Factors of special interest is number of days before next admittance to hospital, the patient's ability to participate in ADL and the patient's self-reported quality of life.

Methods

Randomized controlled trial with 500 palliative cancer patients treated at Naestved Hospital in Denmark. OT intervention programme for the intervention group (N=250) and standard palliative treatment and care for the controls (N=250).

A systematic review including studies of OT for palliative cancer patients will take place. The patient's needs for OT will be analyzed using baseline informations from the randomised controlled trial.

OT intervention will include goal-setting using COPM (Occupational Therapy Performance Measure), training performance of ADL, home assessments, adaptive equipments and supervision of patient and relatives.

The effects of the intervention will be analyzed based on patient validated questionnaires, including EORTC QLQ-C30 and Barthel's index of ADL performance, and number of days admitted to hospital is measured using an administrative patient registration system.

Results and conclusion

The study is ongoing and there is no results.

Contribution to the practice/evidence base of OT

This study will contribute to the evidence of OT for palliative cancer patients. It will provide knowledge of the contribution of the occupational therapists within the multidisciplinary team among patients with advanced cancer and it will define the OT rehabilitation goals that these patients have.