

A 10 Years' Single Center Experience on Palliative Care Service Utilization among Patients on Hemodialysis

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Background

Hospice services (HS) are underutilized in the hemodialysis (HD) population. Incorporation of palliative care (PC) medicine into dialysis care teams may help to improve the quality of end-of-life (EOL) care in this population.

Methods

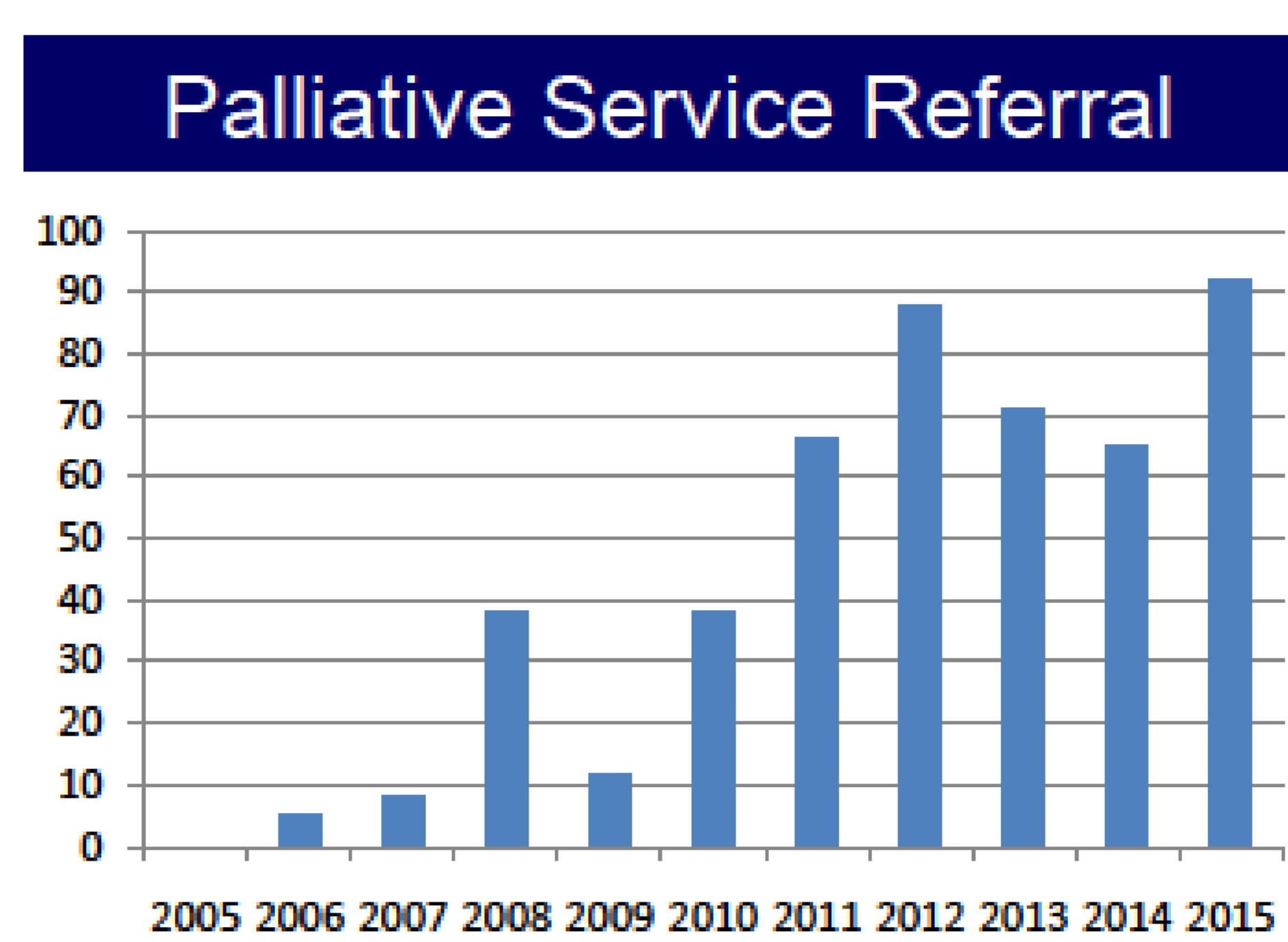
This retrospective study evaluated PC and HS involvement in HD population at a single dialysis unit. Electronic medical records of HD patients who died between January 2005 to August 2015 were reviewed. These included a pilot that incorporated PC medicine into the dialysis unit care team instituted in 2012 (QIP). Timing and frequency of palliative/hospice consults and location and cause of death were analyzed pre- and post- palliative intervention.

Conclusions

- Although hospice services have increased overtime in this dialysis unit, they continue to be underutilized, which is also seen in national data.
- Palliative care and Hospice services may help improve the quality care by ensuring that patient's care matches their goals as evidenced by fewer patients receiving aggressive treatment in the peri-mortal period.
- Systematic approach to proactively identify patients who are at risk of death is necessary to determine goals of care and maximize end-of-life quality.

Patients Characteristics

Total number of patients	n=217
Women	43%
Median age	79 (IQR 64-84)
Palliative care involvement	42%
Hospice care involvement	1%
Advance directives	70% (of those with PC)
Median timing of last dialysis treatment prior to death	24 days
Median timing of first palliative consult prior to death	51 days
Median timing of first hospice consult prior to death	15 days
Average number of palliative care visits	4 (0-20)



Hospice Service Referral

Year	Percentage of Utilization
2005	0%
2010	5%
2015	17%

Services Required during Peri-mortal Period

Service	Palliative Medicine Involved	Palliative Medicine not Involved	p-value
Hospitalizations	46%	57%	p=0.7
Intensive care unit	30%	36%	p=0.4
Life sustaining measures	20%	48%	p=0.003

