

2014 TVN Catalyst Research Program Grant

Integrating a quality-of-life assessment and practice support system in palliative home care

Funding:
\$99,983

Many older adults with advancing and life-limiting illnesses wish to spend as much time as possible comfortably at home rather than in hospital, which can only occur with the support of home care nurses. These seriously ill people often have complex problems that affect their ability to function and their overall quality of life (QOL). Routine assessment of their perceived healthcare needs and their QOL is necessary to ensure that patients' and family caregivers' concerns are visible to healthcare professionals, so that they can be effectively monitored and addressed. These types of assessments involve asking people to respond to questions about their symptoms, their physical, psychological, social and existential/spiritual wellbeing, and their experiences with health care. Handheld electronic systems are increasingly used and recommended to facilitate such QOL assessments. However, it is often unclear how to best implement these systems to facilitate uptake in practice. In addition, there is a need for information about the potential of such systems to improve patient- and family-centered outcomes.

This study will address these issues through the integration into practice and evaluation of an innovative electronic QOL Assessment and Practice Support System (QPSS) in palliative homecare nursing. The project involves working with clinicians, patients and family caregivers to answer the following research questions: 1) How can we best facilitate the integration and routine use of electronically-administered QOL and healthcare experience assessment instruments as practice support tools in palliative homecare for older adults who have chronic life-limiting illnesses and the care of their family caregivers? 2) Does the routine use of these instruments improve quality of care, as indicated by patients' and family caregivers' reports of enhanced QOL and experiences with the care provided?

The results will contribute much-needed knowledge about the use of electronic QOL assessments in palliative homecare nursing, with the ultimate goal of improving outcomes of care for seriously ill older adults and their family caregivers who are living at home.

Principal Investigator and Project Leader:

Richard Sawatzky, PhD, RN



Host Institution: Trinity Western University

Richard Sawatzky is an Associate Professor and holds a Canada Research Chair in Patient-Reported Outcomes at Trinity Western University, and is also a research scientist with the Centre for Health Evaluation and Outcome Sciences (CHÉOS) at Providence Health Care. He completed his doctorate and masters degrees in nursing at the University of British Columbia and his undergraduate studies at Trinity Western University. Dr. Sawatzky's clinical background is in palliative care and medical nursing care, and his research focuses on patient-reported outcomes (PROMs), and quality of life assessment in people with chronic life-limiting conditions.

Principal Investigator:

Robin Cohen, PhD



Host Institution: Jewish General Hospital

Robin Cohen is an Associate Professor in the Departments of Oncology and Medicine in the Faculty of Medicine at McGill University, and Research Director of Palliative Care McGill, an interdisciplinary network of clinicians, educators, researchers and allied-health professionals who work together across five teaching hospitals to provide palliative care, education, and research. Dr. Cohen is also an Investigator at the Lady Davis Institute of the Jewish General Hospital. She obtained her doctorate, masters and undergraduate degrees in psychology at McGill. Her research focuses on optimizing the quality of life of people at the end of life, and that of their family caregivers.

Principal Knowledge User:

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