Defining patients eligible for palliative care by GPs and community nurses

Influence of implementation of PaTz palliative home care groups

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PaTz
PALLIATIEVE THUISZORG

Parelproject
ZonMw

What is a PaTz group?
In PaTz groups (inspired on GSF) general practitioners (GPs) and community nurses in a neighbourhood:
- meet 6x per year in presence of a palliative care consultant
- identify patients in need of palliative care
- discuss palliative care needs and options

Identifying patients with palliative care needs
For identifying patients in need of palliative care it is important that PaTz participants can be eligible for palliative care:
- When they would not be surprised if the patient would not die within a year / 6 months
- Before all curative or life-prolonging treatments have stopped

Aim
To study whether the implementation of PaTz had an effect on elements PaTz participants mention in defining who is eligible for palliative care
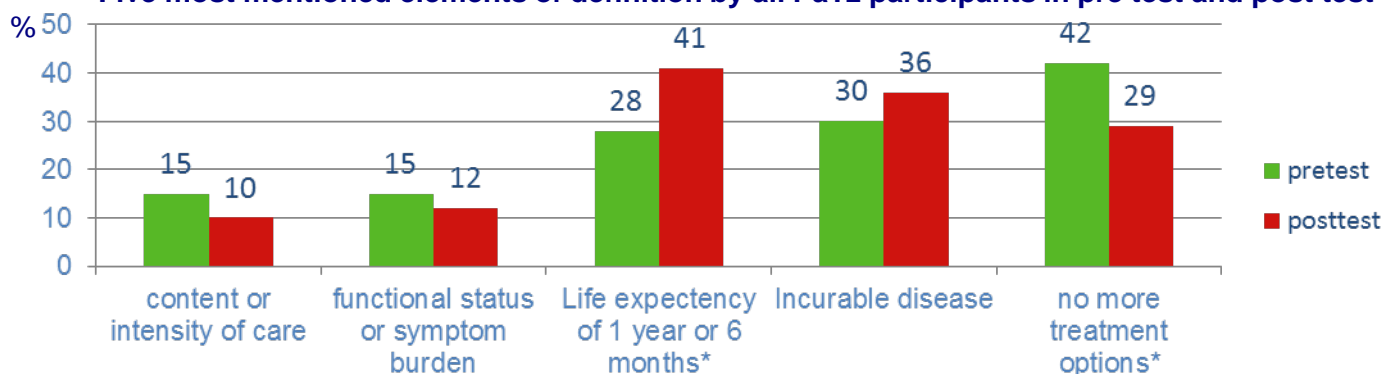
Results
- Figure shows the 5 elements most mentioned in defining patients eligible for palliative care
- Two significant differences; after implementation of PaTz:
- ⬇ 'when there are no more options for treatment'
- ⬆ 'life expectancy less than 1 year or 6 months'
- Both for GPs and community nurses

Methods
- Questionnaire study before and 14 months after start of PaTz group
- Population: participants of 40 PaTz groups:

GPs: pre test 235 (65%), post test 197 (52%)

Community nurses: pre test 54 (54%), post test 58 (52%)

- Open ended question on giving a definition of patients eligible for palliative care
- Coding of elements of definition in categories
- Selection of respondents who answered the definition question pre and post (n=164)

Five most mentioned elements of definition by all PaTz participants in pre test and post test

	content or intensity of care	functional status or symptom burden	Life expectency of 1 year or 6 months*	Incurable disease	no more treatment options*
pretest	15	15	28	30	42
posttest	10	12	41	36	29

* Significant difference between pre test and post test (mcNemar test, p<0.05)

Conclusion
- PaTz resulted in a positive change with regard to defining who is eligible for palliative care
- This is potentially due to the attention for the surprise question in the PaTz method
- This is important to achieve timely identification of patients with palliative care needs

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