**Palliative Care Screening**

**Appraisal of a tool to identify patients’ symptom management and advance care planning needs**

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**BACKGROUND:** The palliative care needs of hospitalized patients often go unmet, resulting in unrelieved symptoms and a lack of understanding about advance care planning.

**OBJECTIVES:** This article analyzes the 10-item Palliative Assessment Screening Tool (PAST) to determine if the PAST aids in the identification of hospitalized patients with palliative care needs and facilitates completion of advance directives.

**METHODS:** A systematic review of studies published from 2012–2016, as well as a retrospective chart review, were used to analyze the PAST. For this 12-week pilot study, all adult patients either admitted or transferred to a 24-bed medical-surgical oncology/orthopedic unit were assessed by the bedside nurse for their potential palliative needs.

**FINDINGS:** Using the PAST seems to improve the identification of patients with palliative needs, leading to better management of symptoms. The PAST is also likely useful in facilitating the completion of advance directives, but this requires further study.

**KEYWORDS**
palliative care; screening; identification; symptom management; advance directive

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