

2nd Global Congress on

Hospice & Palliative Care

September 29-30, 2016 Toronto, Canada

THERAPEUTIC TOUCH™ IN A GERIATRIC PALLIATIVE CARE UNIT: A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW

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Complementary therapies are increasingly used in palliative care as an adjunct to the standard management of symptoms to achieve an overall well-being for patients with malignant and non-malignant terminal illnesses. A Therapeutic Touch Program was introduced to a geriatric Palliative Care Unit in October 2010. Two volunteer Therapeutic Touch Practitioners offer the therapy to patients who have given verbal consent.

Objective: To conduct a retrospective review of Therapeutic Touch services provided to patients in an in-patient geriatric palliative care unit to better understand the impact of the Therapeutic Touch Program on patient care.

Methods: A retrospective medical chart review was conducted on both patients who received Therapeutic Touch as well as a random selection of patients who did not receive Therapeutic Touch.

Client characteristics and the Therapeutic Touch Practitioners' observations of the patient's response were collected. Descriptive analyses were conducted on all variables.

Results: Patients who did not receive Therapeutic Touch tended to have lower admitting Palliative Performance Scale scores, shorter length of stay and were older.

Based on the responses provided by patients and observed by Therapeutic Touch practitioner the majority of patients receiving treatment achieved a state of relaxation or sleep.

Conclusions: The results of our chart review suggest beneficial effects for significant numbers of participants and deserve a more robust comparison study in future. Recommendations also include revising the program procedures to improve processes and documentation, and ensure all or most patients are offered the therapy.

Biography

Senderovich is a physician at Baycrest Health Science System with practice focused on Palliative Care, Pain Medicine and Geriatrics. She is a lecturer at the Department of Family and Community Medicine, and Division of Palliative Care at the University of Toronto who actively involved teaching medical students and residents. She has a broad international experience and a solid research background. Her research was accepted nationally and internationally. She is an author of multiple manuscripts focused on geriatrics, patient's centered care, ethical and legal aspect of doctor patient relationship, palliative and end-of-life care.

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