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The GP's role with the terminally ill patients

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The number of patients requiring palliative care is constantly increasing as the population ages. Primary care doctors play the key role in the whole process and should be an integral part of the care team.

The purpose of this study is to identify the weak points and barriers that are GPs facing in relation to their terminally ill patients and to propose appropriate strategies that may be of use in encouraging more effective delivery of palliative care by GPs.

This case study uses an online questionnaire that was designed for general practitioners in Czech Republic. Total number of respondents was 160. All respondents were able to express their personal opinion and experience via email.

The results of the study indicate that the key organisers in the management of terminally ill patients are considered to be family and general practitioner. The core barriers are time constraints, lack of information among society, need of postgraduate training curricula and lack of specialist teams and their support.

The outcome of this study indicates a series of options for improving the engagement of GPs in palliative care, e.g. workshops for GPs, strengthening of inter-professional collaboration, undergraduate curriculum for medical students, educative campaigns for patients and financial support for palliative teams.