

# Life review intervention among patients in palliative care

Authors : Garrouteigt, Constance<sup>1,2</sup>, Décamps Greg<sup>1</sup> et Gana Kamel<sup>3</sup>

1 : Laboratory of Psychology Labpsy EA 4139, University of Bordeaux, France

2 : Clinique Tivoli-Ducos, Bordeaux, France

3 : University of Bordeaux, France

Contact : [constance.garrouteigt@u-bordeaux.fr](mailto:constance.garrouteigt@u-bordeaux.fr)

## Introduction

End of life involves psychological and physical upsets:

- Self losses
- Feeling of loneliness
- Death anxiety
- Feeling to be a burden
- ...

- Dependance
  - Physical impairment
  - Pain
  - ...

The relation between patient and their relatives is impacted.

Also, patients would focus:

- More on openness to new experiences,
- Reflection and introspection
- Relativism of values, tolerance
- Spirituality and/or religion etc

« Leave a trace » to:

- Account for a form of immortality
- To pass to one's loved life lessons or wishes for them

Life review is:

- A universal cognitive process
- Appearing during developmental crises or when a person is confronted with a close death
- An a posteriori evaluation of past life events to see the life as a coherent whole

## Aim

Evaluate this intervention among french palliative care patients

## Method

Participants:

- Terminally ill cancer
- Who have stopped specific treatments OR are discussing this possibility with their oncologist
- Be physically and cognitively able to participate in close interviews
  - Participation of one relative
- None cognitive or psychiatric impairment
- Controlled physical pain

Procedure:

- Questionnaire pre and post intervention (gratitude, life satisfaction, QoL, emotional distress)
- Two interviews based on life review
- One with the relative to create a photo album based on previous interviews and personal photos

- In a oncology unit

- Interviews recorded, transcribed and analyzed on NVivo®

## Status of the study

- Started in decembre 2020 and is ongoing

- 19 eligible patients but:
  - 7 not included
  - 7 refusals:

3 from patients  
(not interested, denial of death)

2 from family  
(afraid about life review ; professional impairment)

2 from patients due to their experience of symptoms  
(asthenia, side effects of treatment)

- 5 patients included but 2 withdrew during the intervention

First results:

- Decrease of the emotional distress
- Stability of the others variables

Patients Feedback:

« [...] Improve quality of communication with relatives »

« Feel considered as a person and not as a dying person »

« [...] remain useful »

« [...] reconsider family conflicts »

« It allowed me to ask myself questions I had never thought of »

## References

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