
TRANSFERRING DYING PATIENTS HOME FROM CRITICAL CARE UNITS: FAMILIES' STORIES OF MAKING THE DECISION

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Statement of the Problem: Evidence suggests many people prefer to die at home rather than in hospitals. However, an integrative literature review showed it is rare to transfer patients home to die from critical care units in the West but anecdotal evidence suggests it is more common in mainland China. Yet no published research was found about families' experiences of this event and the practice of transfer in mainland China.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: A qualitative study was carried out which comprised a 12-month retrospective audit and narrative interviews with family members of patients who were transferred home to die. In China, a general intensive care unit in a southeast tertiary hospital was selected to conduct the audit and recruit family members. First the audit reviewed number and characteristics of patients transferred home to die. Then interviews explored families' experiences of this event and the practice of transfer in mainland China.