

# To Refer or Not To Refer? – Attitudes and Beliefs of Oncology Regarding Palliative Care Referrals

Nicholas Lee Wei Law\*, Yoke Ling Choo and Pei Jye Voon

## Abstract

Palliative care's integration into oncology is crucial, with early referral linked to enhanced outcomes. Survey results from Sarawak General Hospital suggest practitioner awareness and access to palliative care, yet tendencies to refer late persist. Our survey showed that senior oncologists tend to refer later in the course of disease compared

Further research is needed to include the rest of Malaysia or Southeast Asia to better understand regional referral practices. National integration of palliative care into oncology training is recommended.

**Keywords:** Palliative care; Oncology; Referrals

## Introduction

Palliative care is a crucial component of oncology, focusing on relieving symptoms and improving quality of life for patients with advanced cancer. The integration of palliative care into oncology training and practice is essential for ensuring that patients receive timely and appropriate care.

Research has shown that early referral to palliative care is associated with better patient outcomes, including improved quality of life, reduced hospitalizations, and lower costs of care [1]. However, studies have also identified barriers to early referral, such as lack of awareness, limited resources, and cultural beliefs.

One of the main challenges in implementing palliative care is the lack of standardized training for oncologists. Many oncologists receive minimal training in palliative care during their medical education and residency training.

This study aims to explore the attitudes and beliefs of oncologists regarding palliative care referrals in Sarawak, Malaysia. The study will investigate factors that influence referral decisions, such as awareness, access, and cultural beliefs.

## Methods

### Study Design

This study was a cross-sectional survey conducted among oncologists working in Sarawak General Hospital, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. The survey was conducted between January and February 2023.

## Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The study included oncologists who were currently practicing in Sarawak General Hospital and had been practicing for at least one year. The study excluded oncologists who were on leave or had not provided their consent.

**Corresponding Author:** Nicholas Lee Wei Law, Department of Palliative Care, Sarawak General Hospital, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. Email: lawnl@sgk.com.my

**Received:** 02-Oct-2023, Manuscript No. jpcm-23-117193; **Editor assigned:** 04-Oct-2023, PreQC No. jpcm-23-117193(PQ); **Reviewed:** 18-Oct-2023, QC No. jpcm-23-117193; **Revised:** 23-Oct-2023, Manuscript No. jpcm-23-117193(R); **Published:** 30-Oct-2023, DOI: 10.4172/2165-7386.1000581

**Citation:** Law NLW, Choo YL, Voon PJ (2023) To Refer or Not To Refer? – Attitudes and Beliefs of Oncology Regarding Palliative Care Referrals. J Palliat Care Med 13: 581.

**Copyright:** © 2023 Law NLW, et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

**Citation:** Law NLW, Choo YL, Voon PJ (2023) To Refer or Not To Refer? – Attitudes and Beliefs of Oncology Regarding Palliative Care Referrals. *J Palliat Care Med* 13: 581.

---

O e a f f e e a c a c a e d e a d d e e  
f a a a e c a e a a e e c a e e (e e  
a e c a - a a e c a e e c e f a c e ). O e  
a c a f e " f e d " a b a a e c a e, e a  
a (97.3%) f e d e a e " d e a e f e d "  
" c e f e d ". A a c a a e e d a e a d a c c e  
a a e c a e e c e a d c a b a a a e c a e,  
e a 75% f a c a (78.9%) a a c c e a a e c a e  
e c a e c e, e e a a c a a a a e c a e  
e d e - e d e c e a a e c a e e - e d e c e.

W e a e d a b e f e e c f e f e a a a e c a e,  
8% f a c a e d e d " f e e " a d e a a  
(92%) f c a c e e d e d " e ". F e a c e

8. Sala RA, Dran G, Bruera E, Nicolai B, Fein E, et al. (2023) Attitudes and beliefs of Argentinian medical oncologists regarding palliative care referral. *Medicina* 83: 10-18.
9. Gu X, Cheng W (2016) Chinese oncologists' knowledge, attitudes and practice towards palliative care and end of life issues. *BMC Med Educ* 16: 1-7.