A Palliative Care Approach to Triage

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Objectives

Describe what palliative care is and the need for aligning palliative care with the expectant area of triage to improve care for those who may die as a result of their injuries.

Identify appropriate setting, equipment, supplies and personnel needed for the expectant/palliative care triage area.

Review the model “A Palliative Care Approach to Expectant Triage,” developed by Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital.
The Problem

“Palliative Care in the context of an MCI is a new component of disaster planning; there is a lack of understanding about how to incorporate community based healthcare, mental health and social services professionals into planning efforts.”

Mass Medical Care with Scarce Resources
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
Anne M. Wilkinson, Ph.D., M.S., Co-lead Author, Senior Social Scientist, Palliative Care Policy Center, RAND Corporation
Marianne Matzo, Ph.D., APRN, BC, FAAN, Co-lead Author, Professor Palliative Care, University of Oklahoma College of Nursing
Maria Gatto, M.A., APRN, Director of Palliative Care, Bon Secours Health System
Joanne Lynn, M.D., M.A., M.S., Senior Natural Scientist, RAND Corporation

The Problem (cont.)

There is a lack of published research for a hospital integrating a Palliative care Approach into Mass Casualty Incident triage and treatment.
Goals
Expectant/Palliative Care

- The primary goal of palliative care is comfort and quality of life
- Comfort care is to make sure the patient is comfortable and the family is supported through:
  - Controlling pain and other physical symptoms
  - Treating the patient with dignity
  - Respecting the patient’s cultural beliefs around death and dying
  - Respecting the patient’s wishes not to receive life-sustaining treatments that do not improve the quality of life
  - Meeting the patient’s psychological and spiritual needs

Expectant/Palliative Care Approach

- Palliative Care is appropriate at any stage of a serious or life-threatening illness and is not dependent on prognosis
- End of Life is difficult to define and may last for an undetermined amount of time
- Any care focused on issues surrounding this phase may be termed end-of-life-care
Who are Expectant/Palliative Care Patients?

- Those who are expected to die over the course of weeks (e.g., those with radiation exposure)
- The already existing palliative care population (e.g., those already enrolled in hospice or receiving palliative care in acute care settings)
- Vulnerable patients (e.g., patients with advanced illness in long-term care facilities) whose situation will be worsened due to scarcities associated with the event
- Patients who are triaged as a result of scarce resources

MCI Triage Exercise

1. High spinal cord injuries
   - Expectant

2. Second- and third-degree burns in excess of 60 percent total body surface area
   - Expectant

3. Profound shock with multiple injuries
   - Expectant

4. Agonal respiration
   - Expectant

5. Soft tissue injuries requiring debridement
   - Delayed
### MCI Triage Exercise (cont.)

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<td>6.</td>
<td>Vascular injuries with adequate collateral circulation</td>
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<td><strong>Delayed</strong></td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Hemorrhage from an extremity that needs immediate control</td>
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<td><strong>Immediate</strong></td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Upper extremity fractures</td>
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<td><strong>Minor</strong></td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Eight year old, not breathing and does not begin breathing with head tilt</td>
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<td><strong>Expectant</strong></td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>High dose radiation exposure</td>
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### Background

Following a MCI exercise at Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital, the After Action/Improvement Plan clearly identified the need to develop plans to make the Expectant/Palliative Care triage area more respectful and functional to the needs of those who may be at the end of life.
Expectant/Palliative Care
HMNH Solutions

- Identify members of a palliative care multidisciplinary disaster team
- Develop plans for:
  - Appropriate location/setting for Expectant/Palliative Care and Deceased
  - Equipment and supplies
  - Staff: specialties, education and competencies
  - Support for patients and their families
  - Staff support
  - Tools for MCI Expectant/Palliative Care Deployment

Expectant/Palliative Care HMNH Toolkit

- HMNH Expectant/ Palliative Care Triage & Treatment Plan
- List of staff who have completed End of Life education
- Expectant: comfort care supply list
- Expectant: comfort care medication list
- Comfort care physician orders
- Triage program guidelines for a patient death
- Coroners contact information and coroner form 18
- Palliative Care Services Information
- Bereavement Guide
- Grief Support Guide
- LA County EMSA Anticipate, Plan Deter Resilience Plan
HMNH Expectant/Palliative Care Triage & Treatment Plan

- Location(s) of Expectant Palliative Care and deceased viewing
- Staff competencies
- Staff PsySTART self monitoring
- Supply carts
- Communication devices
- Coroner’s case documentation

Identify Where the 6 Patients You Triaged as Expectant Would be Transported

1. High spinal cord injuries
   Expectant/Palliative Care
2. Second- and third-degree burns in excess of 60 percent TBSA
   Expectant/Palliative Care
3. Eight year old, not breathing and does not begin breathing with head tilt
   Deceased Viewing Location
4. Agonal respiration
   Expectant/Palliative Care
5. Unresponsive patients with penetrating head injuries
   Expectant/Palliative Care
6. Profound shock with multiple injuries
   Expectant/Palliative Care
**Patient Tracking**

HICS 254 Disaster Victim/Patient Tracking
- Log of all patients triaged
- Category of triage
- Disposition

**Staff competencies**

- List of staff who have completed “End of Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC)” education
- 2 day course inclusive of Anticipate, Plan and Deter Personal Resilience Program
Other Tools Available as Downloads from CHA

- Expectant: comfort care supply list
- Expectant: comfort care medication list
- Comfort care physician orders
- Triage program guidelines for a patient death
- LA County Coroners contact information and coroner form 18

HMNH Palliative Care Services
LA County EMSA Anticipate, Plan Deter Resilience Plan

Building Your Responder Personal Resilience Plan™

Anticipate Plan Deter
Maximizing Resilience For Healthcare Workers

References/Resources

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Anticipate, Plan Deter – LA County EMSA, 2010-2013 S. Merritt; D. Schreiber, Ph.D.
Building Your Responder Personal Resilience Plan


Questions?
Thank you

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