

Attitudes toward end-of-life care: A survey of cancer patients and others in Korea

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Attitudes toward end-of-life care for cancer patients vary, but most patients, family members, oncologists and members of the public are receptive to withdrawing futile life-sustaining treatments in people who are dying, found a Korean study in *CMAJ* (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*).

The study, by researchers in Korea, aimed to determine attitudes towards end-of-life care, as most previous studies looked only at euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide. The researchers surveyed 3840 people, including 1242 cancer patients, 1289 family caregivers, 303 oncologists from 17 hospitals from across the country and 1006 members of the general Korean population.

"In this survey of attitudes toward critical interventions at the end of life of [terminally ill patients](#), the most interesting finding was that most of the participants in each of the four study groups — patients, family caregivers, oncologists and members of the general public — showed a positive attitude toward the withdrawal of futile life-sustaining treatment and active pain control," writes Dr. Young Ho Yun, National Cancer Center, Goyang, Korea, with coauthors.

Palliative care in Korea is still fairly rare, and oncologists and family physicians in institutions provide medical care.

"In the absence of effective palliation, it is no surprise that patients and others would choose a route that avoids the prolongation of suffering,"

write the authors.

Patients and the general public generally favoured patient autonomy and hastening the dying process but [oncologists](#) and [family caregivers](#) were more opposed to this option. Age, sex and religious beliefs were associated with acceptance of euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide.

Provided by Canadian Medical Association Journal

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