

# Palliative care reaching more inpatients with serious illness

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(HealthDay)—Inpatient palliative care teams are reaching a broader mix

of patients earlier in the course of their illness, according to a study published online Dec. 6 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Laura A. Schoenherr, M.D., from the University of California in San Francisco, and colleagues used data from the Palliative Care Quality Network (2013 through 2017) to assess [current practice](#) and trends among patients cared for and outcomes achieved by inpatient specialty [palliative care](#) services in the United States.

The researchers identified 135,197 patients referred to inpatient palliative care (51.0 percent female; mean age, 71.3 years). Cancer was the most common primary diagnosis (32.0 percent), but rates decreased over the study period (odds ratio [OR], 0.84). Pain and other symptoms were common but improved significantly during the consultation period. More than three-quarters of patients were discharged alive (78.7 percent), a number that increased over time (OR, 1.36). Rates of discharge referral to clinic-based (OR, 4.00) and home-based (OR, 2.63) palliative care increased significantly over the study period, whereas hospice referrals decreased (OR, 0.56).

"These trends suggest that inpatient palliative care teams are reaching a broader group of patients with serious illness and are seeing them earlier in their illnesses, consistent with emerging data and guidelines," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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