

## The Relationship of Palliative Care to Quality of Life in the Elderly: A Literature Review

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<b>Keywords:</b> Palliative Care, Quality of Life, Elderly.	<p>The increasing number of elderly people in Indonesia poses a serious challenge to the health and social sectors. Palliative care, which aims to improve the quality of life of the elderly, plays an important role in providing holistic care for patients facing chronic or terminal illnesses. This study aims to examine the relationship between palliative care and the quality of life of the elderly through a literature review. A literature search was conducted using two databases, Google Scholar and PubMed, with the keywords "Palliative Care," "Quality of Life," and "Elderly," and selecting articles published between 2015 and 2022. A total of six articles met the inclusion and exclusion criteria, which were then systematically analyzed. The results of the analysis showed that palliative care contributes significantly to improving the quality of life of the elderly, especially through physical, psychological, social, and spiritual support. This care is proven to be effective both in direct intervention, homecare, and education to the elderly family. However, the limitation of relevant studies is a challenge in examining this topic in more depth. This research is a literature review conducted with a systematic approach. This study uses PICOST analysis to identify relevant literature. The analyzed literature was obtained from Google Scholar and PubMed databases, using the main keywords "Palliative Care," "Quality of Life," and "Elderly." Inclusion criteria included articles published between 2015 and 2022, available in full text, and relevant to the topic. A total of 6 articles that met the inclusion criteria were used in this analysis. The results of the literature review show that palliative care can consistently improve the quality of life of the elderly. Aging, which causes a decrease in body function and endurance, makes the elderly more vulnerable to physical and psychological illnesses, so palliative care is very important to maintain their quality of life. According to WHO, quality of life includes physical, psychological, social, spiritual and environmental aspects. Of the 314 articles identified, 38 were duplicates and were excluded. After assessing the quality and appropriateness of the articles to the topic, 6 journals were obtained that met the criteria for systematic analysis. This selection flow is shown in the PRISMA flow chart. Palliative care can significantly improve the quality of life of the elderly, both in terms of physical, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects.</p>
<p>This is an open access article under the <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/">CC BY-NC</a> license</p> 	<p><b>Corresponding Author:</b> Muhamad Kafa Fahmi Universitas 'Aisyiyah Yogyakarta <a href="mailto:kafafahmi402@gmail.com">kafafahmi402@gmail.com</a></p>

## INTRODUCTION

The increase in the number of elderly people is a global phenomenon that also occurs in the Asian region, including Indonesia. Data shows that in 2000 there were 35 million Asians aged 65 years and over, an increase of 12% compared to the previous decade, with the age group 85 years and over experiencing a spike of up to 38%. In Indonesia, the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) estimates that by 2045 the number of elderly will reach 63.31 million people or around 20% of the total population, and is expected to rise to 25% or 74 million people by 2050 (BPS, 2018). This surge poses great challenges, especially if pre-elderly preparation is less than optimal, which can have an impact on the health, independence and productivity of the elderly. The growth of the elderly population is also accompanied by an increase in dependency rates, where in 2015 there were 10 elderly people covered by every 100 productive-age residents, and this figure is projected to be 20 by 2035 (Andari, 2019). This demands special attention in the formulation of health and social policies that are right on target.

The quality of life of the elderly is an important indicator in evaluating the well-being of this age group. There are six main dimensions in measuring quality of life, namely: physical health, psychological well-being, level of dependence, social relationships, environmental conditions, and spiritual aspects. These six aspects are interconnected and provide a comprehensive picture of the well-being of elderly individuals (Hidayah et al., 2018). In this context, the Indonesian government has regulated the importance of elderly health care in Law No. 36 of 2009 concerning Health, which states that elderly health efforts must be directed at improving a healthy, productive and dignified life. One important approach in the care of the elderly, especially those with chronic or terminal illnesses, is palliative care. This concept is not only limited to end-of-life care, but starts as early as the diagnosis of a life-threatening disease. The main goal of palliative care is to improve the patient's quality of life through pain management, psychological, social, and spiritual support, and holistic attention to the patient's needs (Shatri et al., 2020).

Previous research has shown that palliative care has a positive impact on the quality of life of the elderly. For example, Afifah & Arianti (2018) stated that spiritual aspects in palliative patients were above the median, indicating spiritual improvement that contributed to a better quality of life. Other studies have shown that a palliative homecare approach that touches on physical, psychological and social aspects is proven to improve the quality of life of stroke patients and cancer patients (Karim & Lubis, 2017; Muyassaroh & Lestari, 2019). In addition, fulfilling spiritual needs also plays an important role in improving the quality of life of the elderly. Research by Anitasari & Fitriani (2021) and Yuzefo et al. (2015) confirmed a significant relationship between spiritual status and quality of life in the elderly. These spiritual needs can be met through worship, prayer, and harmonious relationships with others and the surrounding environment. Family support, as shown by Angshera et al. (2020), also contributes greatly to maintaining the psychosocial condition of the elderly.

In the context of palliative care, the role of nurses is vital. Nurses are not only responsible for physical needs such as eating, bathing, dressing, and administering medication, but also assisting the elderly in meeting their spiritual and emotional needs. This role shows that

palliative care is a comprehensive service that is very relevant to the needs of the elderly, especially in improving their quality of life.

Based on the above explanation, the researcher has an interest in further examining the relationship between palliative care and quality of life in the elderly. This study is expected to contribute to the development of more effective and humane nursing interventions for the elderly population in Indonesia.

## METHOD

This literature review will use a systematic approach to identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant literature on the relationship between palliative care and quality of life of older adults. To limit the scope of the question and facilitate the literature search, the following approach was used:

First Analyze the Problem PICOST (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome, Study Design, Time Frame). The details of the PICOST format used are (1) Population: Elderly patients undergoing palliative care, (2) Intervention: There is no direct intervention because the research is a literature review, (3) Comparison: There is no comparison group analyzed, (4) Outcome: Summary of research results regarding the relationship between palliative care and the quality of life of the elderly, (5) Study: The study used was research with a Cross Sectional Design, (6) Time: The articles reviewed were published in the range of 2015-2022 to ensure data currency.

The two literatures analyzed were obtained from two databases, namely Google Scholar and PubMed, using the main keywords (Palliative Care, Quality of Life and Elderly). The keywords were combined using the Boolean AND operator into:

"Palliative Care AND Quality of Life AND Elderly" The search focused on articles in Indonesian and English, with full text access, and relevant to the topic.

The three literature criteria include:

- a. Inclusion criteria The literature included in the review must meet the conditions (1) Accessed from the Google Scholar or PubMed database, (2) The research subjects are elderly people undergoing palliative care (3) Articles available in full text (4) Written in Indonesian or English (5) Published between 2015 and 2022, (6) In accordance with the topic of the relationship between palliative care and the quality of life of the elderly.
- b. Criteria Literature will be excluded from review if: Only available in abstract form, not accessible and Not relevant to the research topic

Fourth To assess the quality of the included articles, the JBI Critical Appraisal Tool for Analytical Cross-Sectional Studies was used. The assessment was done using a checklist that included a number of methodological criteria. Each criterion was assigned a score: "Yes" = 1 point "No", 'Unclear', or "None" = 0 points. Articles scoring  $\geq 50\%$  were deemed eligible for inclusion in this literature review analysis. The scoring form is attached in the appendix section of this manuscript. Fifth, Literature Selection (Prisma), The article selection process is shown systematically in the PRISMA flowchart. The initial search yielded a total of 314 articles: Google Scholar: 296 articles and PubMed: 18 articles. After checking for duplication, 38 duplicate articles were found and removed, leaving 276 articles. Next, irrelevant articles based on title and purpose were eliminated, leaving 270 articles. After selection according to the inclusion criteria and quality assessment, 6 articles were used in this review.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The journal search process was conducted systematically using two databases, Google Scholar and PubMed, using the keywords: Palliative Care, Quality of Life, and Elderly, which were linked using the Boolean operator AND to be: "Palliative Care AND Quality of Life AND Elderly".

Inclusion criteria used in the search included:

- a. Articles in full text form
- b. Indonesian or English language
- c. Published in the range of 2017-2022
- d. Access to the journal is free

All journals that meet the criteria are downloaded one by one from each database, then checked for duplication using the Mendeley application. The initial identification results showed 314 articles. After checking, 38 articles were found to be duplicates and excluded. Next, an assessment of the quality and suitability of the article content to the topic was carried out, and 6 journals were obtained that were suitable for systematic review. This selection flow is shown in the PRISMA flowchart.

**Table 1.** Research Findings

No.	Title / Author / Year	Country	Language	Research Objective	Type of Research	Data Collection Method	Population, Sample Size, and Average Age	Research Instrument	Results
1.	Needs Assessment of Palliative Care Services for Dementia Patients	Indonesia	Indonesian	This qualitative study aims to explore nurses' experiences in caring for dementia patients and efforts to fulfill their needs in obtaining	Qualitative study	Interview	Participants aged 30–50 years	Purposive sampling technique	A good understanding of palliative care is required so that palliative services can be beneficial for dementia patients to improve their holistic health

				palliative care services					until the end of life and to reduce the burden on families.
2.	Quality of Life of Stroke Patients in Palliative Homecare	Indonesia	Indonesian	To explore in-depth the quality of life of patients in palliative homecare	Qualitative	Primary data (interview) and secondary data (medical records)	13 participants	Purposive sampling technique	The study proved that stroke patients' quality of life improved in palliative homecare. Providing information services and collaborating with medical teams and social workers is crucial for meeting patient needs and achieving quality of life.

3.	The Relationship Between Quality of Life and Palliative Care Needs in Gynecological Cancer Patients at Dr. Hasan Sadikin Hospital	Indonesia	Indonesian	To examine the relationship between quality of life and palliative care needs in gynecological cancer patients	Cross-sectional	Interviews, questionnaires, and medical records	Sample size: 67 people	Functional Assessment of Cancer Therapy - General (FACT-G version 4), consisting of 27 items	Quality of life is related to the palliative score. The lower the palliative score, the better the quality of life.
4.	The Effect of Palliative Care Education Intervention on the Quality of Life of PLWHA on Antiretroviral (ARV) in Biak Numfor District	Indonesia	Indonesian	To analyze and synthesize the effect of palliative care education intervention on the quality of life of PLWHA on ARVs in Biak Numfor District	Quasi-experimental design	Pretest - posttest nonequivalent control group, purposive sampling	Sample: 120 participants	WHO QOL HIV BREF questionnaire	The palliative care education intervention had a simultaneous effect of 17.2% on improving quality of life, 15.6% on behavioral change, and 15.5% on increasing knowledge. Behavior

									and knowledge influenced quality of life by 4%.
5.	The Effect of Palliative Care on Improving the Quality of Life of Advanced Stage Nasopharyngeal Carcinoma Patients at Dr. Kariadi Hospital Semarang	Indonesia	Indonesian	To analyze the effect of palliative care on improving the quality of life of advanced-stage NPC patients	Observational	Research group divided into two: treatment group (received palliative care) and control group (did not receive palliative care)	45 patients	Questionnaire	Palliative care improved the quality of life in patients with advanced stage NPC
6.	Quality of life, psychological burden, needs, and satisfaction during specialized inpatient palliative care in family caregivers of advanced cancer patients	Germany	English	To investigate the quality of life, psychological burden, unmet needs, and care satisfaction of family caregivers (FCs) of advanced cancer	Pilot study	Questionnaire administered to FCs at the beginning of the patient's SIPC admission	Aged over 18 years	Aged over 18 years	FCs of severely ill cancer patients appear to experience significant psychosocial burdens, including distress, anxiety, and depression

				patients during specialized inpatient palliative care (SIPC) and to assess the feasibility and acceptability of a questionnaire survey					during SIPC. Their quality of life seems lower than the German normative population, especially in the mental health domain.
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In this discussion, the relationship between palliative care and the quality of life of the elderly is analyzed based on six journals that meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The review results indicate that palliative care consistently improves the quality of life in older adults, as evidenced by increased quality of life scores after interventions were implemented. Aging is a natural process that leads to a decline in bodily functions and immunity, making the elderly more vulnerable to various physical and psychological illnesses. In such conditions, palliative care plays a crucial role as a holistic approach from the moment of diagnosis until the end of life, aiming to maintain their quality of life (Anita, 2016).

According to the WHO, quality of life encompasses physical, psychological, independence, social relationships, spiritual, and environmental aspects. Research by Rumanti et al. (2020) revealed a significant relationship between quality of life and the need for palliative care ( $p = 0.004$ ). Although palliative scoring emphasizes physical conditions, quality of life is also greatly influenced by social and emotional factors. This is evident in cases where patients with poor physical scores still report good quality of life due to strong family support and internal motivation. Other studies show that home-based palliative care also has a positive impact. Research by Karim & Lubis (2017) demonstrated that post-stroke elderly patients who received home palliative care experienced significant improvements in physical domains such as daily activities, mobility, eating, and communication.

Not only direct interventions, but palliative education has also proven to be effective. In studies by Musyassaroh (2019) and Wamaer et al. (2019), educational materials such as booklets and flipcharts improved the knowledge and behavior of both the elderly and their families, which in turn significantly improved their quality of life ( $p < 0.05$ ). Psychosocial issues such as depression, loneliness, and anxiety often accompany terminal illnesses. Older adults

with cognitive impairments like dementia are at particularly high risk for a reduced quality of life. In Kusumawaty's (2019) study, nurses played a vital role in providing emotional and physical support through a palliative approach, especially since dementia patients often struggle with basic activities like personal hygiene and spatial orientation. With the increasing elderly population, issues related to quality of life have become even more critical. Therefore, palliative care whether through direct intervention, home-based services, or education is an important and effective approach to maintaining and improving the quality of life for elderly individuals facing chronic and degenerative illnesses.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion of the literature review from six journals relevant to the research topic and objectives, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between palliative care and the quality of life in the elderly. This can be measured by the fact that the lower the palliative score in the elderly, the better their quality of life. Palliative care can significantly improve the quality of life of older adults, including physical, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects. Therefore, the implementation of comprehensive palliative care needs to be expanded and strengthened to ensure the well-being of the elderly in Indonesia, especially with the growing elderly population facing long-term health challenges.

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