

Evolving Sri Lankan Model for Delivery of Palliative Care: 2010-2019

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Sustainable model for delivery of palliative care services is a timely need with increasing incidence of life-threatening illnesses. Therefore, the objective of this study was to conduct a desk review to describe the process of evolving model for delivery of palliative care in Sri Lanka during the period of 2010 - 2019. The interventions carried out during this period were grouped as (i) policy (ii) capacity building (iii) drug availability & (iv) initiating service delivery interventions. Palliative care was included in the National Health Policy for year 2016–2025 and several sectoral policies including policy on Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (2010), Cancers (2015), Elderly Health (2017). Also, palliative care has been identified at the Health Master Plan 2016–2025. Capacity building programmes on palliative care were incorporated to basic, in-service, post basic and post graduate programmes. Commencement of Post Graduate Diploma in Palliative Medicine, development of curricula of post basic diploma in palliative nursing, inclusion of palliative care module to the post basic training programme on public health nursing officers were some of the interventions. Ensuring availability of all oral morphine formulations throughout the year with inclusion of liquid morphine and allowing prescription of oral morphine for one-month duration were some of the interventions for improving availability of drugs for palliative care. Also, lower dosage forms of fentanyl preparations were introduced. Pain management guidelines and palliative care guide books were launched. Commencement of palliative care consult services at selected tertiary and secondary care hospitals and commencement of home-based care services by public health nursing officers and volunteers were some of the service delivery interventions. These interventions paved the way for developing 5-year national strategic framework on palliative care development for year 2019 - 2023 and the effect of these interventions would contribute for evolving sustainable palliative care service delivery model in Sri Lanka.

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