



Speech-Language Pathology in Paediatric Palliative Care: A Scoping Review of Role and Practice

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Background and aims of this review

Attempts have been made within the literature to clarify both the role and scope of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) within the area of palliative care. Currently, there are no specific clinical practice guidelines for SLPs working in paediatric palliative care.

This review provided background knowledge for further research to explicitly define SLP role and scope of practice within paediatric palliative care so as to assist with the development of clinical practice guidelines.

Method

An up-to-date scoping review of literature and resources was undertaken. Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) scoping review method was utilised for searching multiple databases. The first search aimed to locate literature in which SLP intervention in paediatric palliative care was specifically addressed (n = 658 sources identified).

A second database search used internationally recognised SLP scope of practice areas as a basis to search for literature and resources (n = 93,442 sources identified). Results were included in this review if the interventions fitted within an SLP's scope of practice (see Figure 1).

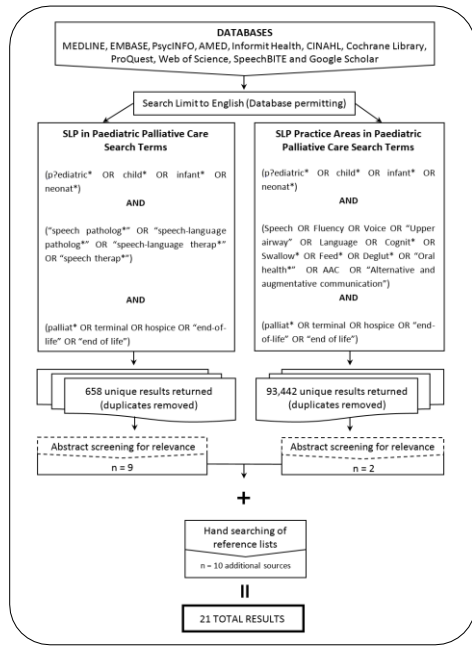


Figure 1: Scoping Review Search Method

Results

A number of key resources (including journal articles, edited books and paediatric hospital guidelines) were found that were suitable for review (n = 21; see Figure 1). Key themes relating to the role of SLPs in paediatric palliative care included:

- SLP role within a multidisciplinary team
- Cognition/Communication
- Feeding/Swallowing
- Upper Airway and Respiration
- Oral Health

Implications for practice and further research

Currently, there are no specific clinical practice guidelines for SLPs working in paediatric palliative care. This review provides background knowledge for further research to explicitly define the SLP role and scope of practice within paediatric palliative care so as to assist with the development of clinical practice guidelines.

Conclusion

There is acknowledgement within the literature that SLPs currently, and should have, a role in paediatric palliative care. Just as SLPs have a place working with paediatric patients at the beginning of their life span (e.g. NICU), likewise the literature confirms that SLPs can contribute in a paediatric palliative care setting—particularly with regard to joint clinical decision-making between the family and multidisciplinary team.

There is, however, very little specific information identifying SLP involvement in the diagnosis and management of swallowing, cognition/communication, oral hygiene and respiratory issues in palliative care.

Like to know more?

If you are a speech pathologist with any experience in paediatric palliative care (either previous experience or currently working in the area) and would like to know more about this research please register your interest by scanning the QR code or visit www.tinyurl.com/SLP-PPC.

Alternatively, for more information please contact Lillian Krikheli (L.krikheli@latrobe.edu.au)

Electronic copies of this poster can be obtained from www.researchgate.net/profile/Lillian_Krikheli



Key References

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