

Canada needs to improve end-of-life care

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Better psychological and spiritual support, improved planning of care and stronger relationships with physicians are necessary to improve end-of-life care in Canada, according to a study by a Queen's University professor.

"High quality end-of-life care should be the right of every Canadian," says professor of Medicine and [Epidemiology](#) Daren Heyland, who is also a researcher at Kingston General Hospital. "But it's not always happening. We know from international studies that Canada ranks ninth in the world in terms of quality of care provided at the end of life."

The study, a questionnaire that aimed to measure satisfaction with end-of-life care for patients with advanced diseases and their families, involved 363 patients over 55 years of age and 193 [family caregivers](#).

While overall satisfaction for end-of-life care was rated as good, ratings for complete satisfaction ranged from nine per cent to a high of only 57 per cent, suggesting the need for improvement.

The highest priorities were improving the [emotional support](#) for patients, better communication and involvement in decisions and improving the relationship between the patient, family and doctor.

Patients were least satisfied with their understanding of what to expect in the end stage, discussions with their physician regarding final location of care, and the use of technology at the end of life.

The study has been accepted for publication in the [Canadian Medical Association Journal](#).

Provided by Queen's University

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