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Abstract Title

Trend analysis in place of death over the past 20 years in Maltese residents

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Abstract

Introduction

Changing population demographics of the Maltese islands over the past 20 years have resulted in an increasingly older population. This has prompted interest in assessing the proportion of hospital deaths vis-à-vis other places. International literature shows great variation in the proportion of hospital deaths, varying from 46.9% in England to 66.7% in Portugal. This study aims to assess the current local situation and trends of place of death over the past 20 years.

Methodology

A descriptive, population-based study was carried out using data from the Malta National Mortality Register at the Directorate for Health Information and Research for the years 1998 to 2017 in persons aged 15 years and over. Trends by place of death for various age groups, marital status, gender and grouped causes of death were analysed.

Results

Overall hospital deaths increased from 62.6% in 1998 to 69.6% in 2017, while home deaths decreased from 19.7% in 1998 to 12.2% in 2017. The percentage of hospital deaths increased in all age groups and by certain groups of causes of death including neoplasms and respiratory conditions. In institutions the largest percentage increases were observed in deaths due to dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Conclusions

A shift in the place of death of residents over the past 20 years has resulted in an increase in hospital deaths with a corresponding decrease in deaths at the usual place of residence. This shift has considerable implications in the assessment of palliative care needs and health care planning of end of life care.

Key Message 1

Current trends show an increase in hospital deaths and a reduction in home deaths.

Key Message 2

Assessment of the current situation is important for planning end of life care.