

KNOWLEDGE OF DYING IN PLACE AND PREFERENCES FOR PLACE OF DEATH AMONG OLDER ADULTS IN HONG KONG

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INTRODUCTION

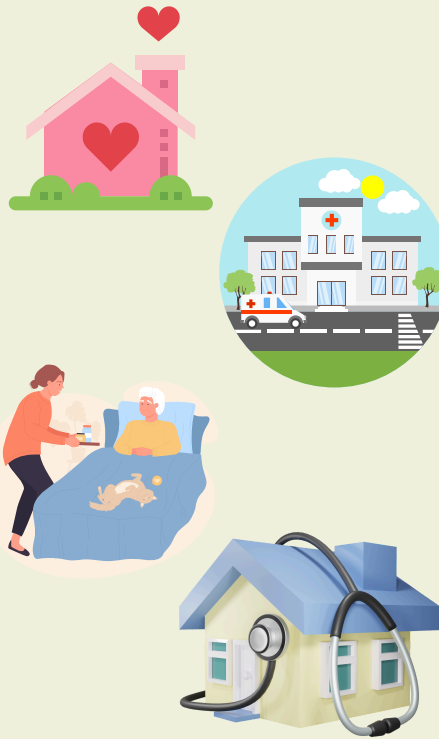
- The concept of dying in place and the preference for the place of death have been widely debated.
- There is a lack of research on older adults' knowledge and preferences of dying in place, despite the growing demand for it.
- In Hong Kong, legislative efforts to revise dying in place policy are ongoing.
- This study aims to investigate the knowledge of dying in place and the preferences for the place of death among older adults in Hong Kong.

RESULTS

- Participants demonstrated a sub-optimal knowledge level (mean = 3.55; range 0-8). (Table 1)
- 54.7% of participants were unaware of the existing law that regulates dying in place in Hong Kong, and 43.5% did not know about the availability of community resources to support patients who choose to die at home.

Table 1: Knowledge of dying in place (n = 503)

Question	Correct answer	
	n	%
1. Are there laws in Hong Kong to regulate dying in place for terminally ill patients?	201	40.0
2. Are there resources or services in Hong Kong community to assist terminally ill patients to achieve their wish to die in place?	284	56.5
3. For those who die naturally outside the hospital, what conditions must be met so that they do not need to be referred to the coroner for trial?	188	37.4
4. Within how many hours after the natural death outside the hospital, family members of the deceased must register at the Death Registry Office with the cause of death certificate signed by the doctor?	234	66.4
5. Within how many hours after the natural death outside the hospital, the body of the deceased must be stored in a legal morgue?	138	27.4
6. Are there laws in Hong Kong to regulate dying at home?	228	45.3
7. Is an autopsy required for the bodies of those who die at home?	239	47.5
8. Does death at home require reporting to the police?	172	34.2
	Mean	SD
Knowledge score (total score)	3.55	2.381



METHOD

- Cross-sectional study
- 503 older adults from Hong Kong participated from 06/2023 to 08/2023.
- Survey was distributed through online and face-to-face methods.
- ANOVA was used to compare knowledge scores among participants with different preferences for place of death.

- The majority of participants (55.5%) preferred to die at home. Other preferences included hospital (18.9%), hospice (17.1%), and care home (8.5%). (Table 2)
- Participants who preferred to die at home exhibited a higher knowledge score (mean 3.84) compared to those who preferred to die in hospital (mean = 2.79) ($F = 5.323, p = 0.001$). (Table 2)

Table 2: Comparison of knowledge score between participants with difference preference for place of death (n = 503).

Preference for place of death	Knowledge score (Mean ± SD)				F	p
	Prefer to die at home (n = 279)	Prefer to die in hospital (n = 95)	Prefer to die in hospice (n = 86)	Prefer to die in care home (n = 43)		
	3.84 ± 2.582	2.79 ± 1.956	3.66 ± 2.056	3.09 ± 2.102	5.323	0.001
Post hoc analysis (Dunnett T3)^a						
Comparing groups		Mean difference	Standard error	p		
Prefer to die at home versus prefer to die in hospital		1.049	0.253	< 0.001		

^aDunnett T3 was used for the post hoc test owing to the non-homogeneity of variances.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provide insights that can inform the revision of current policies, the enhancement of community resources supporting dying in place, and the strengthening of life and death education targeted at older adults.

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