

1. Training and selection of the Nurse Case Managers (NCMs) and the Trained Volunteers (TVs)

NCMs

The nurses had to have at least 3 years' clinical experience in palliative and/or HF care and pass the exit competence test in writing and a practice case before the intervention.

Training Content (18 hours)

Part I (9 hours)

(a) Art of communication, (b) Symptom control & specific HF palliative problem management, (c) End-of-life issues, (d) Advanced directives, family/patient preference and involvement, (e) Multi-disciplinary approach of care management, (f) Available health and social resources, and (g) Integrated model of palliative HF care

Part II (9 hours)

(a) Assessment, planning, intervention and documentation using the Omaha system, (b) Art and skill of home care and telephone nursing, and (c) Case management for HF palliative patients (d) Practice with a training case

Volunteers

The selected volunteers had to have good communication skills and be able to complete the training and provide service after training. The TVs had to pass the exit competence test in a practice case before the intervention.

Training Content (9 hours)

(a) Communication skills, (b) Service ethics, (c) Social support appropriate for volunteer workers, (d) Making referrals to professionals, and (e) Practice with a training case

2. The specific reasons for excluding the 305 patients after eligibility assessment include:

- Transferred to nursing homes (n=85)
- Not communicable (e.g. too weak, language barrier) (n=62)
- Not living in service area (n=32)
- Not meeting clinical inclusion criteria (n=31)
- Patient was keen to seek active treatment (n=26)
- In terminal phase (n=21)
- Refused by the patient (n=18)
- Being recruited to other programmes (n=17)
- Diagnosed with psychiatric disorders (n=9)
- Passed away (n=4)