

Management of sub-cutaneous medication administration in the home – Queensland lay caregivers perspectives.

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Most palliative care patients prefer to be cared for at home. While promoting quality of life for patients, this preference impacts on their carers. Lay caregivers in Australia, can be required to deliver and adjust complex medication regimes that include subcutaneous injections. This prospective qualitative study aimed to investigate caregivers perceptions concerning the injection of subcutaneous medications in the home.

Fourteen carers were interviewed on two separate occasions, once during the care giving stage and again two months after the carer's bereavement. Interviews were based on a semi-structured schedule that attempted to explore whether carers regarded their medication provider role as a positive or negative experience. Interviews were digitally-recorded, transcribed verbatim and the text content analysed using QSR N6 software

In the first interview, carers expressed anxieties associated with their ability to undertake the task of administering injections. The majority had concerns regarding the processes associated with injecting and experienced fears that they may overdose their family member. In the bereavement interview carers reflected that they were pleased they had been able to contribute to the symptom relief of a family member. It appears that although carers would not necessarily volunteer to inject family members they were generally empowered by the experience.

The data collected is necessary to inform a better understanding of the factors that influence outcomes in palliative caregiving. Development of that understanding will influence the design of interventions that support lay caregivers to successfully achieve their extended care giving role.