ACCESSIBILITY, UTILIZATION AND ACCEPTABILITY OF A COUNTY BASED HOME CARE SERVICE FOR SICK CHILDREN IN SWEDEN

Charlotte Castor¹, RN, PhD student; Inger Hallström¹, Professor, RN, Head of Division Child and Family Health; Kajsa Landgren¹, RN, PhD, Lecturer & Helena Hansson¹, RN, PhD, Lecturer

¹Department of Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, Lund University, Sweden
²Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, Copenhagen University Hospital Rigshospitalet, Denmark

CONCLUSION

- County-based home care service, HCS, can constitute a supplement to hospital care for children with cancer, through different stages of illness, with high levels of acceptability and satisfaction
- Few referrals and variation in the number of referrals and the diagnoses between HCS units indicate unequal and inequitable accessibility and utilization

CONTEXT OF STUDY

Home care service in the county of Scania in the southern part of Sweden is organized in eight units.
The goal is to provide home care for all inhabitants regardless of diagnosis, prognosis and age when needed.

METHOD

Data on referrals and referred children were collected from medical records of all children 0–17 years of age, referred to eight HCS units during 2015–2018. Demographic data and data on parental and child satisfaction, safety and preference for care, were collected by a questionnaire from parents to 23 children.

AIM

To determine characteristics in children and referrals of children to a county-based home care service in Sweden and to assess its acceptability.

FINDINGS

The map illustrates proportionally variations of referrals of children (grey circle); children cared for (white circle) and children with cancer cared for (blue area), by HCS.

Further findings:

- 355 referrals led to one or more periods of HCS for 171 children in different ages with a wide range of illnesses
- 5% of the referrals were palliative care
- Children with cancer (30%) composed the largest group
- 70% of the care tasks were intravenous administration of drugs most often of antibiotics.
- Median age for children provided HCS was 5.5 years (range 17.9, IQ 2.5-9.0)
- Parents reported high rating of parental and child satisfaction (98% / 74%) and feeling of safety (97% / 79%) with HCS
- Parents reported preference for home care in over 96% of the home care service visits

FUNDING

The Swedish Childhood Cancer Foundation, Sweden; Lions Research Foundation Skåne, Sweden; The Jonas Foundation, Sweden; Region Skåne, Sweden, and Mjölkdroppen, Sweden.

Contact information: charlotte.castor@med.lu.se