The need of Palliative Care: a scenario of a public high complexity hospital in Brazil

The epidemiological and demographic transition in Brazil presents a challenge to the management of public health. Chronic Noncommunicable Diseases (CNCD) has the highest incidence in elderly population which demands longer hospitalizations in a system that has not increase the number of hospital beds in the past decade. In this scenario arise Palliative Care (PC), a therapeutic approach for patients with life threatening diseases that seeks to mitigate the pain and ease the suffering of patients and their families. The objective of this research was to identify potential patients to palliative care by creating a situational diagnosis of two months of hospitalizations at HUCAM. To this end, documentary and quantitative research was conducted identifying patients who could be benefited by Palliative Care. Data as Age, Diagnosis and hospitalizations were collected. Palliative Performance Scale, used to monitor disease progression and as indicator of the functional decline of patient, was applied to define the necessary level of Palliative Care. Among the 198 identified patients, 57,1% were older than 60 years, 48% were suffering from cancer, 64% had more than one hospitalization. Unfortunatelly, 18,2 % died during this research. The result shows that people maybe dying alone and suffering. Therefore, the implementation of palliative care could lead to an early discharge or to a dehospitalization optimizing the use of hospital beds of medium and high complexity also respecting the dignity of the ones facing death.