CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

An Environmental Scan of Respite Care Services Available in Québec, Canada: Preliminary Results

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Introduction: Locating respite services requires a high level of digital literacy among families to navigate limited resources within complex healthcare systems. In Québec, Canada, respite care services are often fragmented across public and private sectors, making service navigation particularly difficult. Consequently, families who could benefit from respite may forgo these services due to lack of knowledge of available services. Therefore, this study aims to: (a) identify, compile, and centralize all respite services available in Québec, Canada; (b) describe the specific features of these services; (c) compare existing services to best practices; and (d) identify potential gaps in the provision of these services.

Methods: An environmental scan of respite care services available in Québec will be conducted by searching grey literature in targeted online databases and search engines. All retrieved documents will be screened by two independent reviewers. Data will be extracted, descriptively analyzed, and geographically schematized. Existing respite care services will then be compared to established best practices for respite care (e.g., ARCH National Respite Care Network Guidelines), to identify opportunities for improvement.

Highlights: For these preliminary results, we focused on one database of caregiving support resources in Québec. Based on the first 50 results for seven keyword searches, we identified 42 resources specific to respite care. Themes identified included: a predominance of short-term respite services (n = 28), limited overnight service availability (n = 8), a care recipient target population typically comprising of older adults (n = 24), and a lack of palliative care services (n = 3). Further results will be available for the 2022 conference, based on additional searches and consultations with patient and caregiver community stakeholders. These stakeholders will review the preliminary search and data analysis strategies and offer recommendations for sharing the results in a user-friendly manner.

This project is led by a transdisciplinary research team with lived experiences as palliative care nurses and family caregivers. By generating a comprehensive analysis of available respite services, this project most clearly aligns with Pillar 3 (partnership) by facilitating identification and
dissemination of community-based carer support services; but also with Pillar 4: building resilient communities by empowering families via increased awareness of services. Compiling all respite services into a central resource will support personal care planning by identifying services that can address different families’ unique needs. This access to information can empower families to seek community-delivered care and encourage innovative collaborations between local organizations and clinicians.

**Conclusions:** By integrating various search strategies, we hope to identify a variety of respite care services throughout Québec. Assessing the features of these services may enable us to identify gaps in localized respite care needs, which may then be addressed through future research and service development.

**Limitations and Implications:** While a comprehensive and innovative approach was developed, not all organizations providing respite care label their services as “respite”, and so may not be identified in this search. However, a user-friendly summary of the identified services will be generated in both analog and digital formats, to share with community support services across Québec.