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Exploring the Psychosocial needs of Tongan Families in Hospice Care

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Abstract

Caring for a loved one with a life-threatening illness has a great impact on the carers psychosocial wellbeing. In Aotearoa-New Zealand, Tongan families are accessing hospice care; however, limited to no research has been conducted on their experiences of hospice care particularly regarding their psychosocial needs. Therefore, this qualitative study explores the psychosocial needs of Tongan families in hospice care to identify strategies that can help improve palliative care and support for Tongan family carers. This study employs the Tongan *Kakala* methodological framework as a methodology within the growing suite of Pacific methodologies. Within the *Kakala* framework, the *talanoa* (Tongan way of dialogue) is a tool utilized to gather data. Five participants are involved in this study who were primary family carers of Tongan heritage who accessed hospice care and resided in Auckland. A total of five family-based *talanoa* sessions were completed, transcribed and analysed through thematic analysis. As a result, five psychosocial needs linked to caregiving were identified: **limited knowledge and information regarding hospice care, ineffective communication by health professionals, lack of engagement by health professionals, dissatisfaction with spiritual support provided by hospice care, and lack of discussion and shared planning for future health care**. Recognizing the Tongan family carers' psychosocial needs led to identifying strategies that would help provide optimal palliative care support for Tongan families in hospice care. This includes hospice service providing care in a way that is culturally sensitive and competent for the family carers, delivering culturally appropriate education about hospice care, employing Tongan health professionals, and increasing engagement by health professionals. Implementing these strategies would help reduce the psychosocial burden of caregiving and lead to better health outcomes for both the Tongan family carers and patients.

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Glossary

Term	Meaning
anga-fakatonga	Tongan tradition or culture
fahu	highest-ranking female within the kāinga
faifatongia	fulfilling obligations
faifekau	church pastor
faka‘apa‘apa	respect
fakatōkilalo	humility
fetokoni‘aki	the reciprocal obligation of helping one another in everything
feveitokai‘aki	genuine respect and regard for the feelings or thoughts of others
hosipesiō	hospice
kāinga	extended family
koloa	goods
lotu	faith/religion/spirituality
me‘a‘ofa	gift
ngatae	tropical coral tree
talanoa	to talk or to tell stories
tauhi vā	nurturing relationships
Taula tevolo	ancestral spirits
ulumotu‘a	highest-ranking male within the kāinga