A MULTICENTRE OBSERVATIONAL STUDY ON LIMITATIONS OF MEDICAL TREATMENT PROVIDED ON TELEPHONE BY PREHOSPITAL ANAESTHESIOLOGISTS

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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To investigate advice given to paramedics by Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) anaesthesiologists, focusing on limitation of medical treatment (LOMT). Our hypothesis was that telephone consultations resulting in LOMTs are frequently related to patients located in health care facilities (HCFs) and nursing homes (NHs).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- A prospective study conducted on four physician-staffed HEMS bases in Finland 6.9.2017–6.3.2018
- Served population 3.8 mil. inhabitants

RESULTS

Of 6,115 (mean 8.4/day) paramedic initiated consultation calls, 452 (7.4%) calls included LOMT and 191 (3.1%) included new LOMT (figure 1 and table 1). A new LOMT was more frequently made if a patient was located in a HCF/NH $n=100/833$ (12%) rather than elsewhere $n=91/5,282$ (1.7%) ($p<0.001$). The reasons for LOMT were; futility of the overall situation (72%), poor baseline functional status (59%), multiple/severe comorbidities (58%) and old age (49%). In 68% of the calls in which new LOMT was made on a patient (without any previous treatment limitations) the anaesthesiologist estimated that some LOMT should have already existed. This occurred more often with patients in HCF/NH compared to other locations ($n=59/67$, 88% vs. $n=43/84$, 51%, $p<0.001$).

CONCLUSION

Prehospital anaesthesiologists advice paramedics on LOMT during telephone consultations and concerning patients in HCF/NHs. They regularly made LOMTs for patients that, according to their professional assessment, should already have had LOMTs.

Figure 1 Consultation calls associated with limitation of medical treatment (LOMT).

New limitation of medical treatment	Patients (n=191)	% of patients with a new LOMT
Do-not-attempt-resuscitation	114	60
No intensive care	89	47
Do not intubate	66	35
End of resuscitation attempt	46	24
Do not transfer to other locations	11	6
No hospital care, primary care	10	5
Other limitations	20	11

Table 1 New limitations of medical treatment (LOMT) during consultation calls. The most common LOMT was to end an resuscitation attempt ($n=42$, 22%). Some patients received a combination of 2–4 new limitations.