

# End-of-life Issues—Preferences and Choices of a Group of Elderly Chinese Subjects Attending a Day Care Centre in Singapore

J A Low,\**MBBS, MRCP (UK)*, W C Ng,\*\**MBBS*, K B Yap,\*\*\**FAMS, MRCP (UK), M Med (Int Med)*, K M Chan,\*\*\*\**FAMS, M Med (Int Med), DGM (Glas)*

## Abstract

**Introduction:** This was an exploratory study that was intended to provide a descriptive analysis of the choices and preferences of a group of elderly Chinese subjects attending a day care centre in Singapore with regard to end-of-life issues. **Materials and Methods:** A semi-structured one-to-one interview was conducted to collect data from the subjects. Qualitative techniques were used to analyse the data. **Results:** Forty-three subjects were interviewed. The median age was 71 years. There were more women than men (58.1% vs. 41.9%). The predominant religion was Buddhism/Taoism. 83.7% and 76.7% of the subjects preferred to be told of the diagnosis and prognosis of a terminal illness, respectively. The person most preferred to reveal the diagnosis was the attending doctor (60.5%). About 83.7% of the subjects have never heard of the Advanced Medical Directive Act, while 37.2% agreed that making an advanced directive would be necessary. Twenty-three (53.5%) would choose the doctor, while 15 (34.9%) would choose a family member as a surrogate decision-maker. Twenty-two (51.2%) thought that euthanasia should be allowed, while 15 (34.9%) disagreed. With regard to supportive measures at the end of life, 67.4% wanted cardiopulmonary resuscitation, 62.8% wanted artificial ventilation, 55.8% wanted nasogastric feeding, 65.1% wanted intravenous hydration and 41.9% wanted renal dialysis. **Conclusion:** There is a need for closer communication between older persons and their carers with regard to end-of-life care. The attending doctor appears to have an important role in this respect.

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**Key words:** *Advanced Medical Directive, Communication, Decision making, Living will, Supportive measures*

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\* Registrar

\*\*\* Consultant

\*\*\*\* Head and Consultant

Department of Geriatric Medicine

\*\* Medical Officer

Department of Accident and Emergency

Alexandra Hospital

Address for Reprints: Dr James Low, Department of Geriatric Medicine, Alexandra Hospital, 378 Alexandra Road, Singapore 159964.