

Fulfilling end-of-life wishes gives peace

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Asking for and honouring last wishes helps to bring peace to critically ill patients and their families, says a new study.

The study is part of an ongoing project that involved a researcher or patient's clinician sensitively eliciting three wishes to best honour the dying person from the patient, the family or other clinicians caring for the patient, and then finding a way to honour them.

"We developed this project to try to bring peace to the final days of critically ill patients and to ease the grieving process," said lead author Deborah Cook, professor at McMaster University in Canada.

"For the patients, we wanted to dignify their deaths and celebrate their lives; for family members, to humanize the dying experience and create positive memories; and for clinicians, to foster patient and family-centred care," Cook added.

The research was published in the journal *Annals of Internal Medicine*. Participants in the study included 40 dying patients, at least one family member per patient, and three clinicians per patient.

Cook's research team interviewed families and clinicians to assess the programme and found that 97.5 per cent of the requested wishes were implemented, at a cost ranging from USD 0 to USD 200 per patient.

End-of-life care was rated high by family members and post-mortem interviews with 160 family members and clinicians gave overwhelmingly positive feedback.