

9. OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES
N. Palliative Care Screening and Consultation

Practice Management Guideline for Palliative Care Screening and Consultation

Introduction

This practice management guideline aims to provide a standardized approach for initiating palliative care consultations in admitted adult patients. As a Level I Trauma Center, early identification of patients who may benefit from palliative care is crucial for ensuring comfort, dignity, and patient-centered care. This guideline will ensure that healthcare providers follow a systematic and evidence-based approach to identify and support patients with palliative care needs.

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this guideline is to facilitate the timely identification and management of palliative care needs among admitted adults.

Screening Process

Screening for palliative care needs should be conducted within 72 hours of admission for all patients meeting consultation criteria, or sooner if needs are identified by provider or team.

Inclusion Criteria:

CRITERIA FOR PALLIATIVE CARE CONSULTATION

For Trauma Admissions: Within 24 Hours of Identifying Criteria

1. Traumatic Injury Associated with:
 - Spinal Cord Injury: Any traumatic spinal cord injury (regardless of level or completeness).
 - Multiple Long Bone Amputations: Two or more long bone amputations (above wrist or ankle) related to the trauma event.
 - High Hospital Mortality Risk
2. Disability and Functional Outcome
 - Pre-existing disability resulting in functional dependence
 - Functional Outcome Incompatible with Patient Wishes
3. Surprise Question- "Would you be surprised if this patient died within the next year?"
 - If the answer is no.
4. Baseline Functional Status
 - Serious Chronic Illness: Presence of life-limiting or advanced chronic medical conditions
 - Frailty: Trauma-Specific Frailty Index (TSFI) > 0.28 with:
 - Chronic Illness & Organ Failure
 - Or
 - Metastatic Disease or Advanced Malignancy
5. Specific Scenarios

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- *Younger patients (18–64 years) with Severe TBI and poor prognosis*
- *Older adults (≥ 65 years) or those with a frailty index > 0.28 or end organ failure combined with:*

- TBI

OR

- Rib fractures

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