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Title: Responding to Unexpected Loss During the Covid-19 Pandemic and the Role of the Palliative Care Interdisciplinary Team

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"Background: The role of the interdisciplinary team (IDT) in meeting the emotional needs of patients also extends to their loved ones, family, and friends. This is especially important when family members are left to grieve from the sudden loss of a loved one. This case is an example of a hybrid in-person/tele-visit model that we have adopted during the Covid-19 pandemic and employed over 300 times.

Case Description: A 73-year-old woman was admitted for treatment of acute decompensated liver Cirrhosis. After a goals of care discussion, the patient was amenable to home hospice with the goals of pain management and maximizing time with family outside of the hospital. After comprehensive discussion with our team, the patient and her husband, although initially in disagreement, felt mutually accepting and comfortable with initiating hospice care. Due to Covid-19 restrictions and ongoing concerns for PPE management, a hybrid visit was conferred involving the physical presence of the Palliative Chaplain along with a simultaneous tele visit from our Music Therapist. The next morning the patient was found to be unresponsive. She was pronounced deceased. The widower espoused gratitude for the care provided by the entire staff. He later sent a thank you note with an accompanying Mass Card, outlining in detail the impact of the last IDT visit, which created a legacy of love for them.

Conclusion: We have established a hybrid in-person/tele-visit model, which has enabled us to support our patients and their families 300+ times.

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