

Ramya Sampath
Summary of Work at Pallium India
May 2023

Overview

I am grateful to have spent an incredibly rich 3.5 weeks at Pallium India with a multidisciplinary approach to understanding Pallium India's provision of community-based palliative care within a global context. Through clinical work in home visits and the inpatient unit, meetings with diverse stakeholders across the organization, attendance of a Global Health Symposium, and a project focused on better analyzing and planning for Pallium's research output, I was enriched by deep clinical and organizational study as well as the opportunity to contribute to clinical care, organizational management, and research development.

Clinical Work

I had the good fortune to join Pallium's home care teams for visits to 6 sites (Poovar, Palode, Bharathanoor, Muttacadu, Kulasekharam, and to Gomathy's home). During these visits, I worked with doctors, social workers, and nurses to assist in care for patients as well as serving as a member of a two person team with nurses on several occasions. I focused my learning on the management of wounds, in-dwelling catheters, pain, anxiety and depression symptoms as well as suggesting modifications to better support screening for hypertension, diabetes, and depression in several patients.

A particular highlight was accompanying Dr. Rajagopal, Jerry Pinto, and Prakash Fernandes (from Cipla Foundation) on a visit to Gomathy's home to see Anil.

I also spent 4 days on the inpatient unit attending inpatient rounds. I had the opportunity to work with trainees in the 6-week foundation course as well as to learn from Dr. Sunil about his comprehensive approach to addressing each patients' multi-system pathologies through focused yet holistic interventions.

Pallium within the context of Global Health

I attended the day-long 2023 Harvard Global Health Symposium virtually, where I had the opportunity to contextualize Pallium's work within the larger context of anti-racist, decolonial praxis toward improving the health of global populations. It helped me better appreciate the challenges of a humanitarian aid based framework in crafting health care structures that serve patients in post-colonial settings. This certainly remains a challenge for an organization like Pallium, which operates in parallel with government health systems, but which relies on donor-based aid to support its operations. This conference and the resultant thoughts it left me with also tied into my prior ethnographic work at Pallium India, exploring the socioeconomic and political context for Kerala's palliative care development.

Organizational Understanding

Throughout the 3.5 weeks at Pallium, a major goal of mine related to my work as a Board Member at Pallium India USA was also to meet with several stakeholders across the organization to better understand their work, challenges, and directions as it pertains to Pallium's future goals. Pallium's staff was generous with their time, and I had the chance to meet with Dr. Amirtha, Dr. Deepak, Dr. Sreedevi, Dr. Rajagopal, Mr. Raj Kalady, Mrs. Deepa, Ms. Smriti, and Mrs. Shalini. Through these conversations, I gained a sense of the major developments that have transpired at Pallium over the past 5 years since my prior work as well

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as important institutional goals around research development, advocacy strategy, clinical education and supervision, and succession planning.

Research Organization

Working with Ms. Smriti Rana and Dr. Deepak Sudhakaran, Spenser and I also gained background into the opportunities and challenges facing Pallium India's team in producing and disseminating research and publications examining the scope of Pallium's work to date. Through these conversations, we were able to see that there is significant untapped potential at Pallium to share their visionary work, yet these efforts are limited by changes in staffing, lack of expertise in research methodologies, lack of training for staff regarding research, and centralization of research output by a few scholars at Pallium.

In order to help address these challenges, Spenser and I have begun to categorize and analyze the research output from Pallium India and affiliated staff to help map out areas for future effort. Additionally, I am working with Dr. Deepak and Ms. Smriti to identify capable global partners to assist in creation and publication of suitable projects within the scope of Pallium's operations. We anticipate completing this analysis by the beginning of June and will plan to share with all the above mentioned people for their review.