

Eli's Hospice Insider

Studies & Surveys: Hospice Patients' Diabetes Care Too Aggressive, According To New Study

Physicians should discuss scaling back or discontinuing diabetes meds, study recommends.

A new study published in the American Journal of Hospice & Palliative Care Medicine may decrease your financial obligations under the Medicare hospice benefit, while also improving patients' quality of life.

Hospice patients' high blood sugar is being treated too aggressively, claims the study conducted by lead author Dr. **Sei J. Lee**, an associate professor of geriatrics at the **University of California San Francisco**. Easing up on glycemic control at end of life "should decrease the risk of hypoglycemia in hospice patients and improve their quality of life," the study's abstract says.

Patients often continue with more aggressive treatment because discussions about reducing or stopping chronic medications are uncomfortable and many patients and families believe that mild hyperglycemia can cause symptoms, the study says. Also, until 2014, Healthcare Information and Data Information Set (HEDIS) quality indicators for glycemic control included hospice patients.

But the situation needs to be handled delicately. "Patients and families fear abandonment from their providers, and unless carefully explained, recommending less medicine may feel like they are receiving less care and attention," Lee told Reuters Health.

Providers should discuss scaling back or discontinuing diabetes meds upon hospice enrollment, recommends the study.

Note: See the abstract at <http://ajh.sagepub.com/content/early/2015/03/31/1049909115578386.abstract>.