



# Palliative Care Challenges in Resource-Poor Settings: A Focus on Men with Advanced Prostate Cancer

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**Introduction:** Palliative care in Ghana is still in its infancy, and the limited availability of quality services has forced patients with advanced prostate cancer to depend heavily on home-based family caregiving. The lack of in-patient palliative care beds and community centres, and the logistical challenges faced by healthcare professionals in conducting home visits, means that the burden of care and support falls on the shoulders of patients and their families.

**Aims:** To explore the experience of managing serious illness in a resource-poor setting from patients' and caregivers' perspectives.

**Methods:** Qualitative research using serial interviews at two points in time, at least 6 weeks apart. A thematic analysis was used to identify key themes to explore the multifaceted challenges in palliative care. COREQ reporting guidelines were used to ensure rigour and transparency

**Findings:** Participants included men living with advanced prostate cancer (n=23), and caregivers (n=23). Five themes and 12 sub-themes were developed inductively from the data. Key issues identified were financial challenges, difficulty in mobilising resources for care, the burden of care, unmet palliative care needs, and support received from compassionate family and informal networks.

**Discussion:** Managing patients with palliative care needs in resource-poor settings imposes substantial financial burdens and logistical challenges, while caregivers struggle to balance care responsibilities usually unsupported by healthcare staff, and cope with feelings of being burdened. The study highlights the need to develop palliative care services to address unmet needs and emphasises the vital role of community support and faith in coping for such population.

**Conclusion:** This study identifies the imperative of addressing financial barriers, enhancing social support, and improving care coordination to provide holistic palliative care in resource-poor settings, as well as support for family caregivers who play a pivotal role.

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