

Does a Nurse-led Preceptorship and Telemedicine Programme reduce ED transfers for nursing home palliative residents?

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Background

Keeping residents in nursing homes (NHs) at their end of life requires trained nurses and adequate specialist palliative care support. The GeriCare palliative programme was developed to improve the quality of palliative care in NHs through education, preceptorship and timely access to specialist palliative care via telemedicine.

Study objective

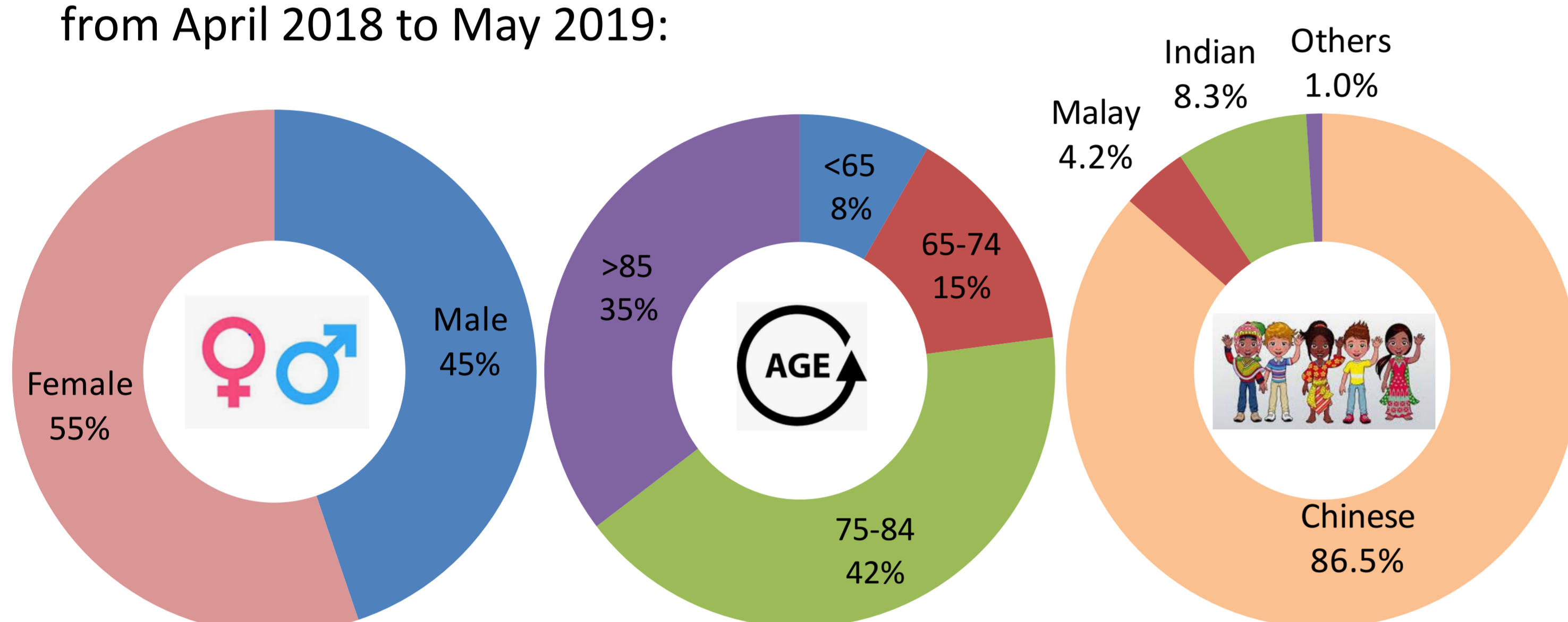
This study aims to measure the impact of this programme in reducing ED (Emergency Department) transfers and hospital admissions.

Methodology

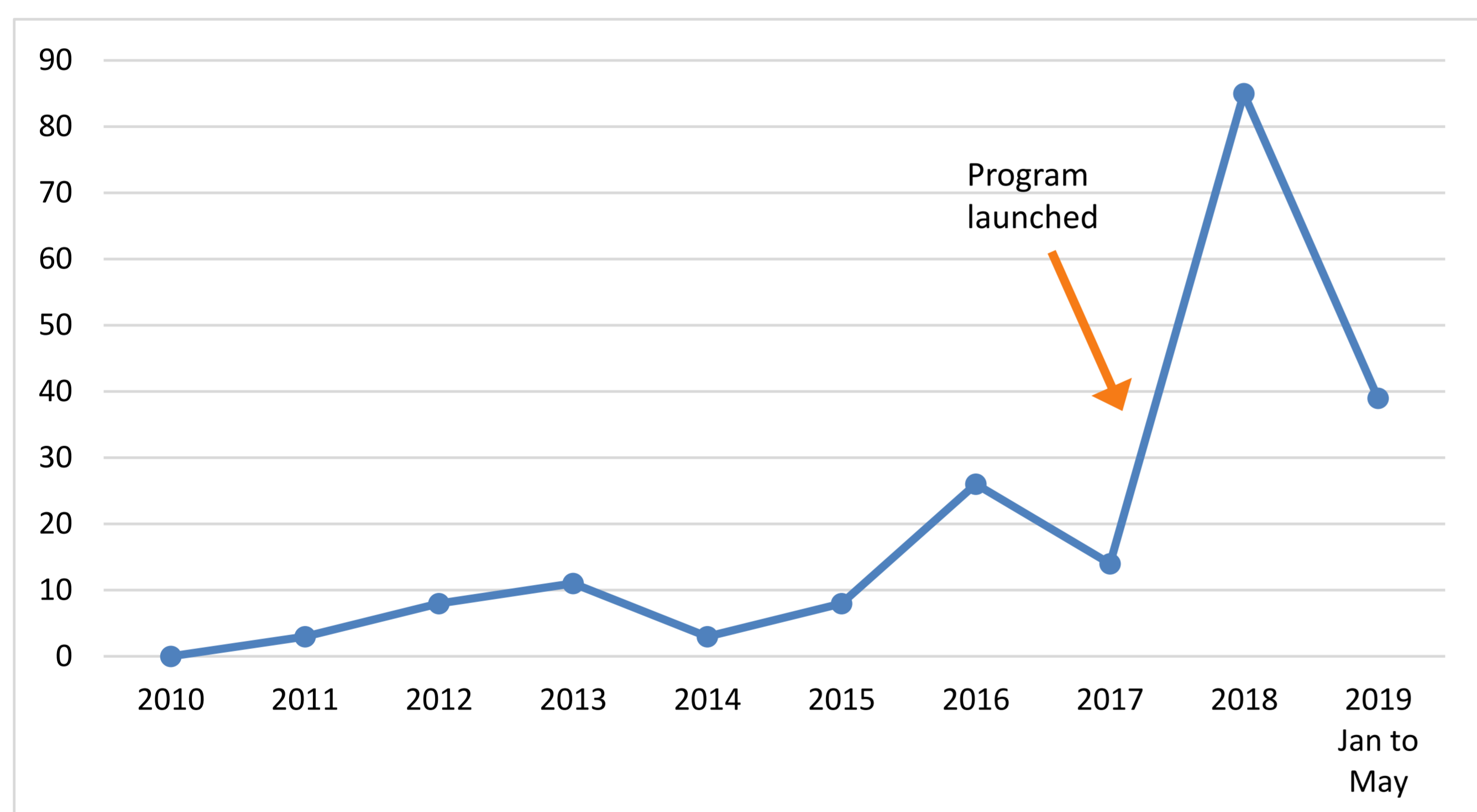
- Teleconsultations which were initiated for palliative residents who would otherwise be transferred to ED traditionally were retrospectively reviewed.
- 96 teleconsultations from 5 nursing homes were conducted from April 2018 to May 2019.
- Demographic data, reasons for teleconsultations, social history and ACP (Advance Care Planning) status were collected from the teleconsultation notes. ED transfers and hospitalisation rates and diagnosis were collected from the hospital's electronic records.

Results

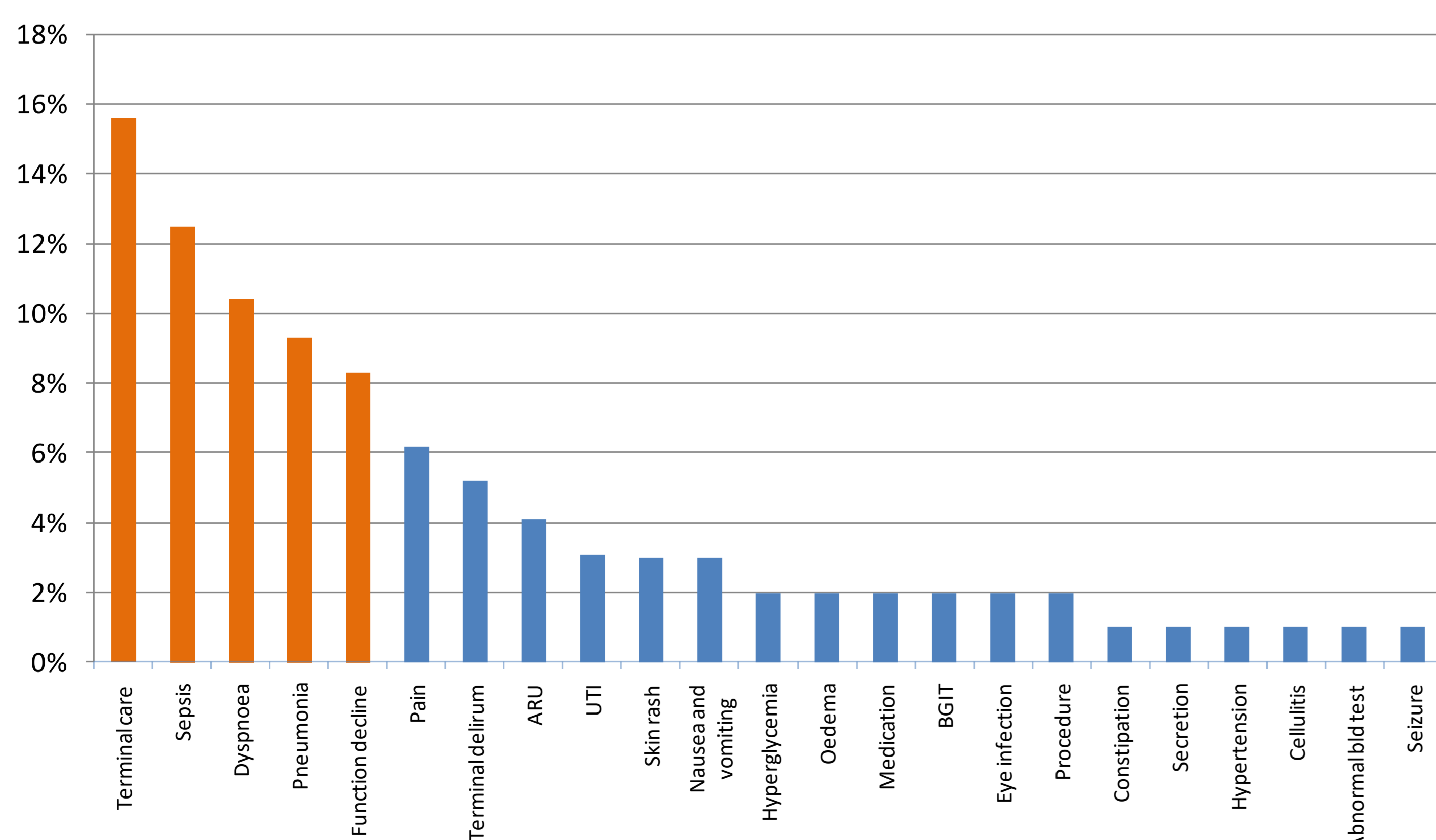
1. Demographics of 86 residents who had in total 96 teleconsultations from 5 NHs (Villa Francis Home, Orange Valley Marsiling, Sree Narayana Mission Home, Singapore Christian Home and the Lentor Residence) from April 2018 to May 2019:



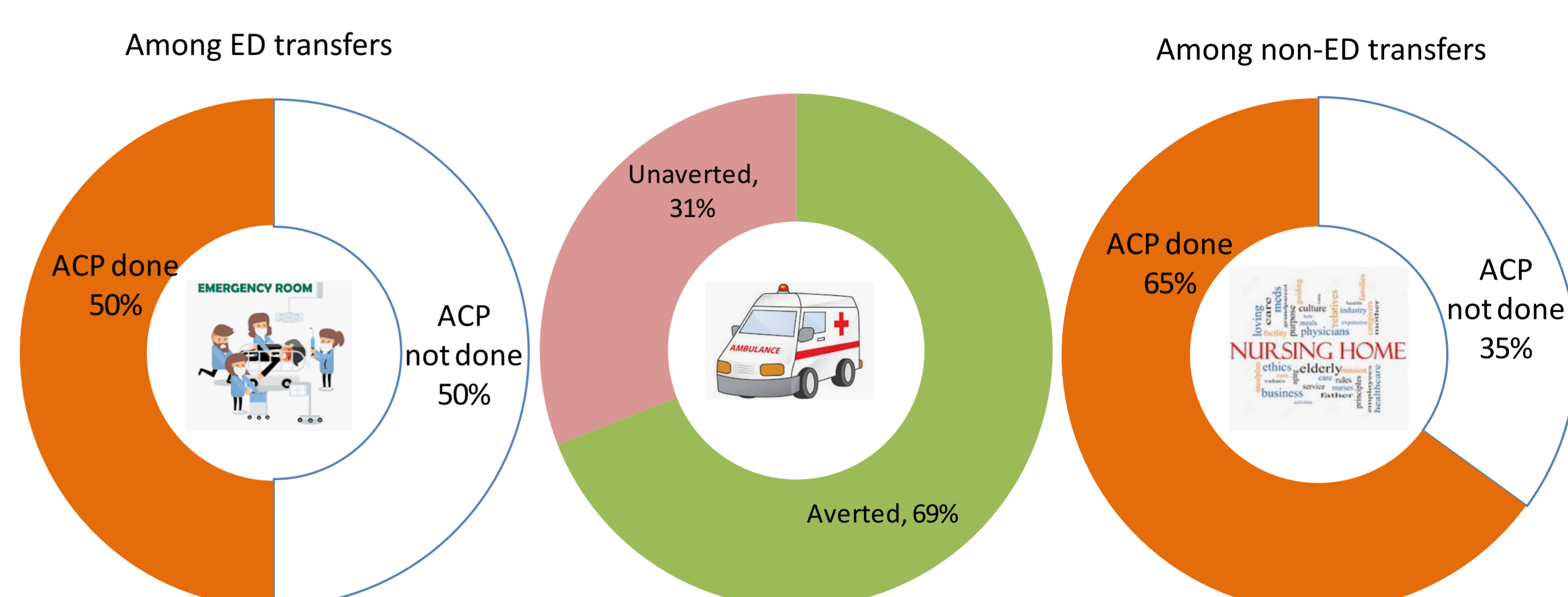
2. Increased in number of calls from NHs for teleconsultations after the GeriCare palliative programme was launched in April 2018.



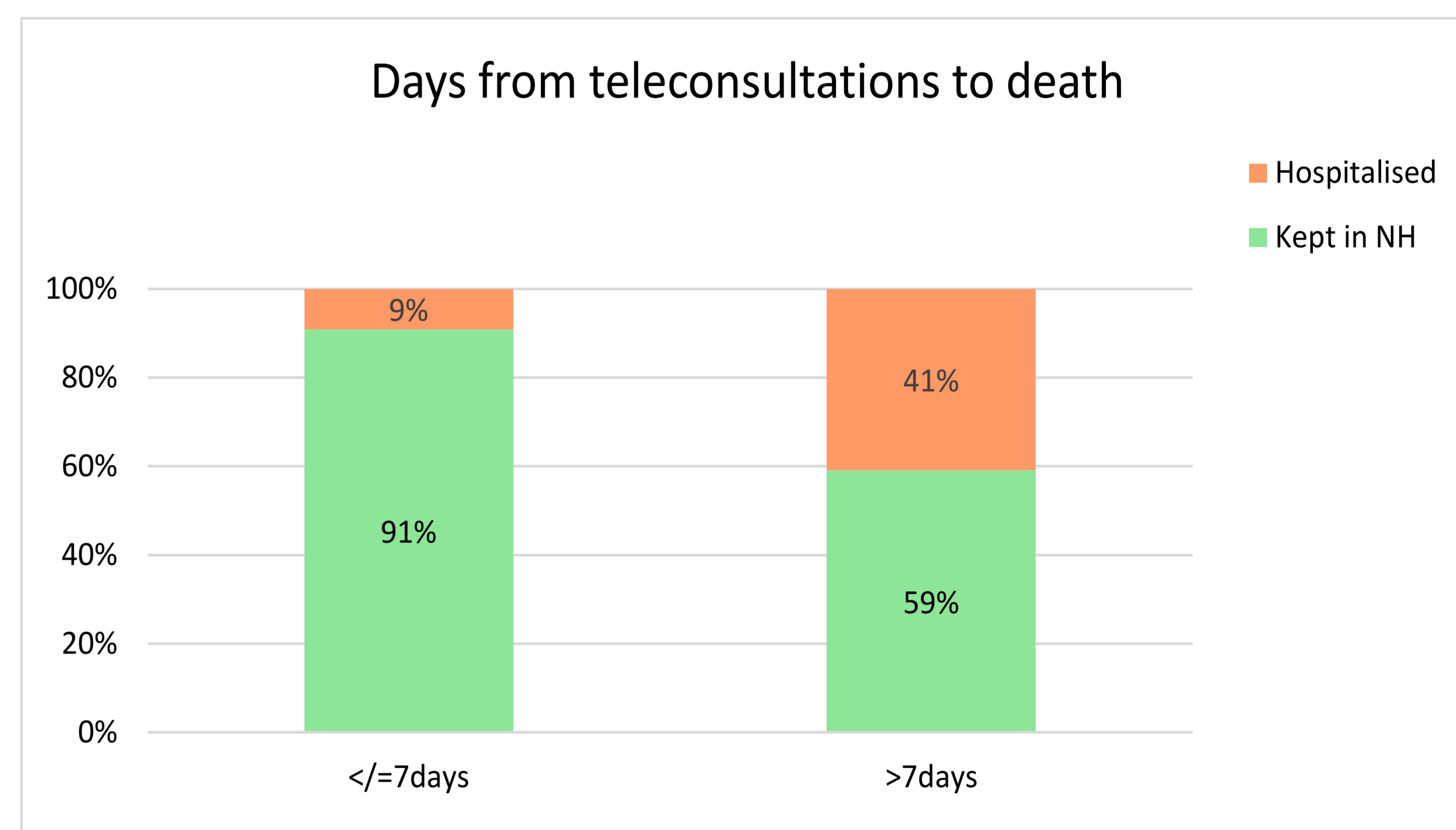
3. The top 5 reasons for teleconsultations were terminal care (15.6%), sepsis (12.5%), dyspnoea (10.4%), pneumonia (9.3%) and functional decline (8.3%).



4. 69% of the teleconsultations managed to avert ED transfers while majority (65%) of the residents who were not transferred to ED had ACPs done.



5. Among the 22 teleconsultations carried out for residents who died within 7 days after teleconsultations, 91% of them averted ED transfers.



Discussion and Conclusion

- The GeriCare Palliative Programme is effective in reducing ED transfers for NHs palliative residents.
- ACP helps to make clinical decisions during teleconsultations to honour residents' wishes.
- The results prove that it is possible to keep residents at nursing home comfortably at their end of life with adequate support from GeriCare palliative programme.
- The key factors influencing the success of this programme include preceptorship of NH nurses to equip them to care for palliative residents and the use of telemedicine to provide timely specialist palliative care to NH residents.

References

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