

**Table 21: Brandt 2005<sup>62</sup>**

Study (ref id)	Brandt 2005 <sup>62</sup>
Aim	To examine the dying person in nursing home settings, in particular the patient characteristics and signs that lead physicians to recognise entering the last 6 weeks of life. It also aims to look at the relationship between specific underlying disease and these symptoms.
Population	All long term nursing home care patients assessed by physicians to be entering the last 6 weeks of life. Other inclusion criteria included admittance to nursing home for long term care or admitted for rehabilitation but during their stay it became obvious that the person would not leave the nursing home.
Setting	Sixteen nursing homes were included
Study design	Prospective observational study
Methods and analysis	Physicians at the nursing home were asked to include people who they felt were entering the last 6 weeks of life. They were asked on entry to rate the person's dementia using the Global Deterioration Scale. Symptoms were measured on a survey asking whether they were present and if so to rank the 3 most important symptoms in recognising the people entering last 6 weeks of life. The person's actual cause of death and underlying disease was then recorded on death. The majority of people had died by 9 days of being entered into the study (92.3%), the median duration of survival was 3 days, with the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 90 <sup>th</sup> percentile being death within 24 hours.

Study (ref id)	Brandt 2005 <sup>62</sup>
Themes with findings	<p>There were 4 symptoms that were rated important in recognising that people were entering the last 6 weeks of life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very little/no fluid intake (42.6% of cases)</li> <li>• Generalised weakness (31.8% of cases)</li> <li>• Respiratory problems/dyspnoea (21.,3% of cases)</li> <li>• Very little/no nutritional intake (24.8% of cases)</li> </ul> <p>The very little/no fluid intake and generalised weakness were most commonly recognised as most important.</p> <p>The doctors rated the following as important for recognising people entering the last 6 weeks of life in specific underlying disease groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diseases of the circulatory system– reduced fluid intake (45.3%) and respiratory problems/dyspnoea (31.1%)</li> <li>• Mental/behavioural disorders (mainly dementia)- reduced fluid (49.4%) or nutritional intake (32.7%) the most important in this group</li> <li>• Malignant neoplasms, including metastases- Generalised weakness (46.7%) and extreme tiredness (26.7%)</li> </ul>
Limitations	<p>The person’s dementia ratings although mentioned in the methods were not described in the paper. There was little definition of what constituted the categories listed as underlying disease and cause of death.</p>
Applicability of evidence	<p>Indirect population, as although the doctors were asked to rate people in the last 6 weeks of life (even though the majority of the people had died by day 9).</p>