

Hospice Enrollment for Individuals with Cognitive Disabilities in Nursing Homes: A Systematic Review

Victoria M. Winogora MPhil, BA, AGACNP-BC¹, Kimberlee Grier PhD, BSN, CHPPN¹, Lara Dhingra PhD², Patricia W. Stone PhD, MPH, FAAN¹, Christine E. DeForge PhD, RN, CCRN¹
¹ Columbia University School of Nursing, New York, NY ² MJHS Institute for Innovation in Palliative Care, New York, NY

BACKGROUND:

- At least 42% of nursing home (NH) residents have cognitive disability (CD; defined as serious difficulty concentrating, learning new things, remembering, or making decisions)
- Growing evidence suggests disparities in hospice care, including decreased enrollment, may affect individuals with CDs

OBJECTIVE:

- To systematically review the evidence on hospice enrollment among United States NH residents with cognitive disabilities

METHODS:

- Following an *a priori* protocol and PRISMA guidelines, we searched US-based, English-language, and peer-reviewed literature published between prior to February 28, 2025 (PubMed, Web of Science, CINAHL, Google Scholar)
- Eligibility Criteria
 - Included adult (>18) patients at US NHs
 - Included patients with CD
 - Examined enrollment into hospice care
- The Joanna Briggs Institute Analytical Cross-Sectional Studies Appraisal Tool was used to assess study quality

RESULTS:

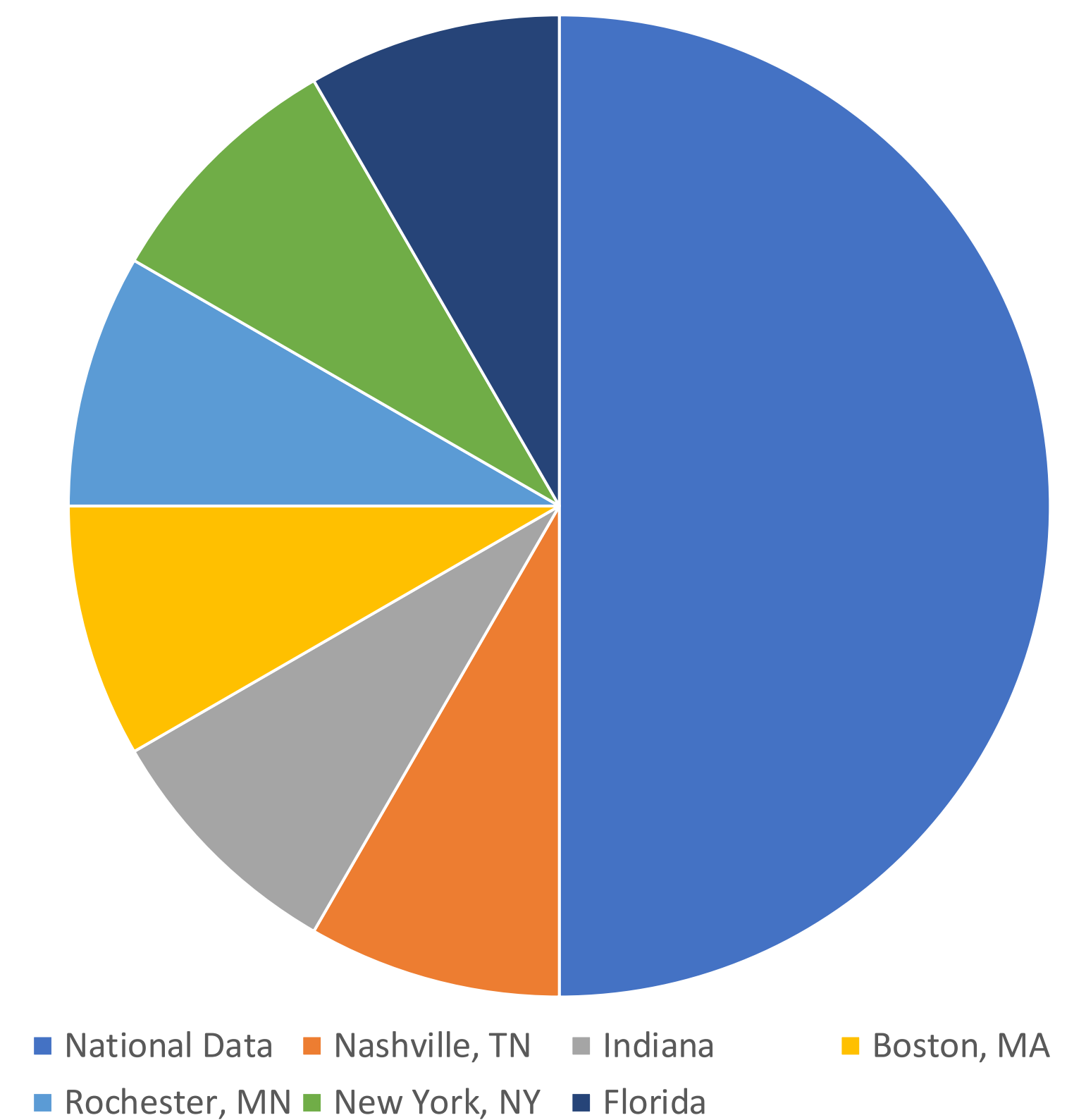
- 479 titles and abstracts were screened, 36 full texts were reviewed, and 12 met inclusion criteria
- The studies included were published between 2004 and 2023, and analyzed data from 1998 and 2018
- In 7 of 12 studies a substantial proportion of NH decedents with cognitive disabilities were not enrolled in hospice at the time of death

Cognitive disability is associated reduced hospice enrollment, a suboptimal end-of-life outcome

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH HOSPICE ENROLLMENT:

- White race and female sex were positively associated with hospice use
- NH decedents with additional diagnoses of cancer or cardiovascular disease were more likely to enroll in hospice than those without
- NH decedents with formal terminal diagnosis documented in their medical records were more likely to be enrolled in hospice than those without

Data Sources



CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Results show hospice enrollment varied but was consistently lower for NH decedents with cognitive disabilities
- Future research should include the broader cognitive disability community to assess hospice enrollment and other end-of-life outcomes, clarify targets for intervention, and address barriers to care

