Introduction

- Palliative care services in Malaysia are in their infancy
- Eight specialists currently deliver hospital based services to 6 public sector hospitals while community care is provided predominantly by Non-Governmental Organizations
- The University of Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC) is one of the hospital services comprising an 8 bedded inpatient unit, hospital consultation service, and a weekly outpatient clinic

Aim

- To evaluate the characteristics of new referrals to our hospital service against the National Council for Palliative Care (NCPC) Minimum Data Set (MDS)

Method

- Data on patient demographics, referral types, diagnostic categories and outcomes was extracted from the UMMC palliative care database from April 2010 until the end of March 2011
- The activity information excludes outpatient clinic contacts however combines both the hospital consultation and inpatient unit components
- This was compared with the NCPC MDS Report for Hospital Services for the year 2009-10 which includes information from 144 hospitals who responded to the survey across England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Results

Types of Referrals

- A total of 856 patients were seen by the palliative care service, 743 (87%) were new patients, 21 (2%) were continuing patients, and 92 (11%) were re-referrals
- In comparison, 86% of patients on the NCPC MDS were new referrals

Age and Gender

- 322 (44%) of the new patients were male and 413 (56%) were female. The age distribution for each gender is illustrated in Figure 1 below

Outcomes

- Among non-cancer patients, a proportionally greater percentage of patients with HIV disease, motor neuron disease, chronic renal failure and other heart diseases are seen by the UMMC Palliative Care service

Discussion

- The palliative care service is well utilized by most disciplines in UMMC as illustrated by referrals from a broad range of specialties
- Coding variations may have led to some variations in non-cancer diagnoses as patients often had multiple morbidities and selecting the primary diagnosis was challenging at times
- The data reflects local population characteristics and a comparison with Malaysian disease statistics such as the cancer registry may identify gaps in access to hospital palliative care services and areas for further development
- More accurate data reflecting activity levels, outcomes and quality markers from the different components of the service will be valuable in monitoring and planning future services as well as guiding resource allocation to meet the local population needs

References