

## MAPPING THE CHARACTERISTICS AND IMPACTS OF TERMINAL LUCIDITY IN CHILDREN

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**Background:** Terminal lucidity (TL) is an unanticipated surge of mental clarity that can occur in the final hours, minutes, or seconds before death. TL has been documented in adult populations, but little is currently known about TL in children. This is the first known study to systematically examine TL in children.

**Aims:** Collect cases of TL in children aged 16 years and under from across the globe and examine whether consistent characteristics and antecedents exist across them.

**Methods:** Seven respondents who had witnessed TL in a child were recruited through purposive sampling and completed a 42-item online survey. Some respondents reported more than one case, resulting in 11 case reports of TL in children.

**Results:** Differences in mental lucidity were evident before and during TL. Most children had severe mental impairment before TL yet had no or mild mental impairment during TL. Some children lost the ability to interact with their surroundings and people before TL but regained these abilities during TL. Respondents believed medication could not be responsible for the changes.

**Conclusions:** Many features typical of TL identified in adult samples are also common to children's cases. TL has important implications for understanding the process of death, as well as for end-of-life care, including for example, whether an escalation or transition of treatment is necessary.

**Keywords:** Terminal lucidity, Children, End-of-life

### Publication:

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