# Hospice Nurse's TikTok Video Raises Awareness on 'Death Rattle' Sound Heard in Final Stages of Life



Julie McFadden, a hospice nurse in Los Angeles, has sought to raise awareness through a TikTok video about the "death rattle," a common but distressing sound heard in the final stages of life. The video has attracted over 1.8 million views, highlighting widespread interest and concern.

The "death rattle" refers to a gurgling or crackling noise occurring as a person nears death, typically within 24 hours. It is caused by air passing through saliva and mucus accumulating in the throat and mouth, as the natural swallowing reflex diminishes. Despite its alarming sound, experts affirm that the phenomenon does not cause pain to the patient, who is usually unconscious during this stage.

McFadden explains that understanding the death rattle could help alleviate fear and trauma experienced by relatives, who might misinterpret the sound as a sign of their loved ones suffering. Studies suggest that about 40% of dying patients exhibit this symptom.

The nurse also noted that while some medical interventions can minimize the rattle, such as medications to dry out the mouth or repositioning the patient, using suction might exacerbate mucus production. Besides the death rattle, other signs indicating the proximity of death include erratic breathing, a weakening pulse, and changes in skin color and temperature.