



Care throughout the Journey Interplay between Primary and Palliative Care

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INTRODUCTION

Serious illnesses, such as cancer, heart failure, advanced dementia, or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), can significantly impact a person's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. When cure is no longer the primary focus, palliative care steps in to provide comprehensive support to individuals and their families, focusing on improving quality of life, managing symptoms, and addressing the unique needs of each patient. In this article, we will explore the concept of palliative care, its principles, the services it offers, and the crucial role it plays in supporting individuals with serious illnesses. Palliative care is a specialized form of medical care that focuses on providing relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress associated with serious illnesses. Unlike hospice care, which is typically provided during the final stages of life, palliative care can be initiated at any point in a patient's illness trajectory, from diagnosis through treatment and into survivorship or end-of-life care. It is an interdisciplinary approach that involves a team of healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, and other specialists, working together to address the diverse needs of patients. Palliative care aims to alleviate physical symptoms, such as pain, nausea, breathlessness, and fatigue, which are often associated with serious illnesses. Through a combination of medications, therapies, and alternative approaches, the care team strives to enhance comfort and improve the overall well-being of the patient.

DESCRIPTION

Palliative care emphasizes open and honest communication between healthcare providers, patients, and their families. This facilitates shared decision-making regarding treatment options, goals of care, and end-of-life preferences, empowering patients to actively participate in their care journey. Coping with a serious illness can take a toll on the emotional and

psychological well-being of patients and their loved ones. Palliative care addresses these aspects by offering counselling, support groups, and other psychosocial interventions to help individuals navigate their emotions, reduce anxiety, and enhance overall mental well-being. Palliative care aims to provide seamless and coordinated care throughout the illness trajectory. It ensures that patients' needs are met at different stages of their illness, whether they are receiving active treatment, transitioning to hospice care, or managing symptoms in the community. Palliative care encompasses a wide range of services designed to meet the unique needs of individuals facing serious illness.

CONCLUSION

This coordination helps avoid fragmentation and improves the overall patient experience. Palliative care provides opportunities for patients to engage in advance care planning, discussing their values, preferences, and goals of care. This helps ensure that their treatment decisions align with their personal beliefs and values, even if they are unable to communicate their wishes later on. Palliative care acknowledges the importance of spirituality and offers support in exploring and addressing patients' spiritual needs, regardless of their religious or philosophical beliefs. By focusing on relieving pain and managing distressing symptoms, palliative care enables patients to maintain their comfort, reducing suffering and enhancing overall well-being. The emotional toll of serious illness can be significant, impacting both patients and their families.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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