
WORKSHOP ABSTRACT

"Palliare" surrounded with care.

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Introduction: Despite scientific evidence about the benefits of Advance Care Planning (ACP) for patients with non-curative treatment, ACP is rarely discussed in practice. Why is it difficult for health professionals to mention ACP? How can patients and their family caregivers take control of their own care process and be actively engaged?

The aim of this project is to empower patients and their family caregivers to discuss their wishes and care goals in a palliative phase, and to provide health professionals with communication techniques and skills to use in a palliative conversation. A common language is introduced so that all parties can communicate more comfortably with each other.

Target groups: We focus on oncology patients with non-curative therapy, their relatives and their professional care providers.

To identify these palliative patients, physicians will have to indicate via MOC (multidisciplinary oncologic consultation) registration if the therapy of an oncology patient is curative or non-curative. If the patient can't be cured, early palliative care needs to be integrated into daily oncology practice by offering an interactive meeting in group. The group of care providers is a multidisciplinary team with oncologists, oncology nurses, palliative care specialists, bedside nurses, social workers, psychologists, etc.

Methodology: We started with a kick-off session in which the members of the project (oncologists, oncology nurse, palliative care specialist and palliative care nurse) explained the purpose of the project to healthcare professionals. We explained a number of concepts and suggested the specific language we want to maintain.

After this first session, we organized interactive workshops for patients and their relatives to provide them with tools to establish and communicate about their end of life wishes and care goals. In this workshop, we explained the concept of 'palliative care' and the importance of an active involvement of the patient and his/ her relatives during this palliative phase. By performing a role play, we elaborated on the questions that are important to ask the physician, and how patients and relatives can ask these questions.

In parallel we organized workshops for different teams of health professionals to provide them with more advanced communication skills and to learn them how to sense when patients are ready for a palliative care conversation. In these interactive workshops we also interspersed communication theory with role plays.

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Results: Surveys based on the validated PAM-13 questionnaire will be provided to all participants (patients and healthcare professionals). Because the project is still in full development at the moment, we don't have results yet. We hope to present our results during the ICIC23 in May 2023 and to enthuse and inspire other healthcare professionals about the importance of patient empowerment during a palliative phase.