



healthcare professionals acknowledged the importance of SPPCS for

Discussion

Improved cure rates for childhood cancer often come at the expense of the children's quality of life during treatment. Despite the progress, there is still a significant percentage (20-25%) of children who succumb to the disease or its complications. Pediatric palliative care poses a challenging dilemma. Specialists in this field aim to get involved earlier in the treatment process, focusing on enhancing the quality of life even during curative treatment. However, some oncologists fear that involving the palliative care team or discussing worst-case scenarios might diminish hope for patients and their families. Conversely, parents and children often express a desire for earlier and more comprehensive information about the possibility of palliative care when a cure is no longer realistic. The Netherlands has made remarkable strides in pediatric palliative care over the past 15 years. From lacking a formal structure, the country now boasts seven pediatric palliative care teams, regional networks of professionals collaborating across disciplines and organizations (from hospitals to homecare), and a Dutch Knowledge Center for pediatric palliative care.

This center includes a physician's support center to address dilemmas related to end-of-life care. Furthermore, an individual care plan format has been established, and the first national evidence-based guideline for pediatric palliative care has been developed, with ongoing updates. The achievements demonstrated in the article by Vallianatos et al. [1] illustrate how effective collaboration among all stakeholders can lead to significant improvements in the quality of pediatric palliative care within a country. Pediatric palliative care centers around the patient and their family, taking into account their quality of life, needs, concerns, and aspirations. Zhukovsky et al. conducted a study focusing on children undergoing advanced cancer treatment, analyzing their symptoms and illness experiences. The research involved interviews with both the children and their parents [2]. The study sheds light on how symptoms and cancer treatments impact their daily lives and relationships. Interestingly, common themes emerged from the interviews with both English and Spanish-speaking children and parents. A related study by Mekelenkamp et al. highlights the challenges in involving the pediatric palliative care team at an earlier stage of the disease trajectory [3]. The researchers investigated the place and cause of death among patients who underwent hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT). Additionally, they conducted a survey among 98 HSCT professionals from 54 centers across 23 countries.

The survey aimed to assess the availability and opinions on specialized pediatric palliative care services (SPPCS). Surprisingly, over 90% of

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