

# Palliative Care in Israel: The Nursing Perspective

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Received date: Nov 20, 2015, Accepted date: Dec 21, 2015, Published date: Dec 24, 2015

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## Home Palliative Care

Home Care services have a major influence on the development of palliative care for cancer patients. A need for these services started during the "Yom Kippur" war, in 1973 when there was urgent need to release many patients from hospitals to care for the wounded. At this time, the Health care funds developed in a very short time Home Care

and to prepare advance directives. Family physicians, oncologists and geriatricians need to be more involved in this process [16].

Ministry of Health issued a directive policy statement describing standards for the development and provision of palliative care services for hospitals and the health insurance companies (HMO).

program became essential to turn palliative care into an integral part of all the treatment processes and disease stages for both adults and children. Palliative care is provided according to common international professional criteria for assessment and management of pain and symptoms for the patient and family: physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological and social.

## Education

Educating health care providers is a major challenge as it involves the requirement to assess the adult's attitudes, skills and knowledge as a basis of being able providing palliative care. It is necessary to ensure compliance of the basic training level of the palliative team with the requirements by Committee for palliative care in the hospital and community units as required [17].

### Nursing education

Basic principles of palliative care are taught in all basic programs in nursing Schools. A palliative Care Module is taught in the post basic course in Oncology Nursing and other chronic post basic courses (geriatric), those programs include knowledge and skills on topics such as the history of palliative care, ethic issues, symptom management and end of life. Many other programs started as a local initiative in community and hospital settings as a short or long course, study days, conferences and special events. We hope that in the near future the ministry of health will approve a special program for master education in palliative care [4,5,11]. Nurses should be supported to the full extent of their scope of practice and capacity in order to enhance the delivery of palliative care to patients and families in need [17].

INPACT – Israel National Palliative Care Training Train the trainers Course, 43-hour program for Physicians, Nurses, Social workers and others. aim is to develop and implement a national inter disciplinary program. will increase the awareness and knowledge of the participants, in the principles of palliative care, enable a dialogue and exchange ideas. program expands the scope and quality of palliative care provided to the patient and families. To date 1400 students have taken part. Two third of them are nurses [5,18].

### Physician's education

A university level palliative care education program has been provided to 130 physicians since 1996. At present various palliative care studies for medical students and continue education programs are at four faculties of medicine. unique platform has provided physicians an expert training to function in various in community services as well as hospitals and hospices. Recently medical palliative care has been recognized as a specialty by the Israeli medical association [18,19].

## Professional's Organizations

"Tmicha" – Israeli association of palliative care, was established as a voluntary association in 1993 and represent all the profession involved in palliative care. It is active in encouraging professional and

public education and in promoting service development. It organizes an annual professional conference [19].

Israel palliative medical society (IPMS) – was established in 1996 as a branch of the Israeli medical association. aim of the IPMS is to represent physicians practicing palliative medicine and to promote medical services and research. Both Tmicha and IPMS are members of the European association of palliative care.

Israeli oncology nursing society (IONS) – majority of the palliative care nurses are members of the Israeli Oncology Nursing Society. society has initiated a wide variety of palliative care programs during the last thirty years, for adults and pediatric nurses and has short courses and study days. Two special publications of the society journal: "Seud Oncology" published articles and guidelines for symptom management and end of life care. About 50 oncology nurses were trained in the "Mc Millan" program in England in several courses on palliative care, the main purpose was to prepare a group of nurses to teach nurses and nursing students in basic and post basic program this topic and to write guidelines and update national learning programs [11].

Palliative care for all- during the last three years there has been an increased awareness among policy makers and advanced practice nurses to teach and implement initiatives of palliative care programs for non-cancer patients, for example: an educational program in dialysis clinics for end stage renal disease, special comprehensive courses for intensive care nurses in general and cardiac units with emphasis on communication with patient and families. In Geriatric nursing – a special module in the post basic course is dedicated to knowledge, skills and attitudes in palliative care and end of life issues for this group of patients. is also a new initiative in the of emergency care to identify, monitor and care for patients who need palliative care and to have the ability to refer those patients to appropriate facilities.

## Summary

Palliative care is increasingly viewed as an essential component of comprehensive care throughout the life course and as a fundamental human right. Nurses in all positions: management, education and bedside care regard palliative care as a unique area of specialty. lead and are part of multidisciplinary teams, that are responsible for the provision of all aspects of palliative care, and they have a special national training as a oncology nurse. Nurses play a major role in providing public education about palliative care in many settings. is a need for developing and providing palliative services in the day-care hospitalization and outpatient settings where oncology nurses meet and care for terminally ill patient and can special care according to their needs.

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This article was originally published in a special issue, entitled: "**Palliative Care & Nursing**", Edited by Michael Silbermann, Middle East Cancer Consortium, Israel