

Annual Meeting on
ASIA PACIFIC ONCOLOGISTS, HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE
May 13-14, 2019 Singapore



M Bercovitch

Tel Aviv University, Israel

A piece of heart and mind

We are here not only to help you to die but to help you to live until you die said Cecily Saunders when she began caring for the dying. Back then this seemed to be a metaphoric expression but today, after forty years, improving the quality of life of those with incurable disease is the basic and primary goal of palliative care. Calman has defined the process of end of life as a “gap at a particular time between the hopes and expectations of an individual and that individual’s present experiences”. The question is about what can we do when all the body functions are down, when the patient cannot eat, cannot move normally, cannot be an active part of his family anymore. What are we able to offer more than a regular nursing and medical treatment for symptoms control, in order to improve his/her quality of life? What really means quality of life for a terminally ill. We will try to answer these questions, while going through a real case presentation, by discussing the role of the interdisciplinary team, and the importance of collaboration between medical professionals. We will present the creative efforts and contributions of each team member, towards one goal; offer a touch of wellbeing to the terminally ill. We will discuss if quality of life, at the end of life, is a paradox, impossibility or reality, and what are the best ways to offer it to our patients and their families. Finally, we will present a short movie about a dream come true and the subsequent impact on the patient and his family.

Biography

Michaela Bercovitch is the director of the Oncological Hospice in Sheba hospital, Tel Hashomer, Israel and a lecturer at Tel Aviv University Sackler School of Medicine. Bercovitch was born in Romania, Bucharest, where she graduated from medical school as MD in Pediatrics. In 1987 she emigrated to Israel and after two years training in Internal Medicine and Geriatrics she continued her medical practice in the Oncological Hospice. In 1998 she initiated a 2 year comprehensive postgraduate course of Palliative Medicine for doctors. She is involved in the education of medical students, nurses and doctors across Israel. Her research fields include pain control, impact of high dose opioids on patients’ survival, development of clinical auditing tools and a hospice oriented clinical database. She is the author of the chapter discussing treatment of pain with TENS (Oxford Textbook of Palliative Medicine), and other chapters addressing euthanasia, non-pharmacological treatments for chronic pain, the role of the physician near death, and the effect of patient-setting on the work of the team. Dr. Bercovitch was a member of the Directory of European Association for Palliative Care (2007-2016); Served as the Chairperson of Israeli Palliative Medicine Society (2002-2016) focusing on the recognition of Palliative Medicine as a sub-specialty and its inclusion as a government-funded treatment. Along the years she has actively participated in the conception and promulgation of the first Israeli law regarding the dying patient.

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