



Identifying and Implementing the Benefits of Palliative Care

Geiger Lisa*

Department of Medicine and Palliative Care, University of Maryland, Baltimore, United States of America

DESCRIPTION

Palliative care is a specialized field of medicine that focuses on improving the quality of life of people suffering from serious illnesses. The objective of palliative treatment is to provide pain relief, symptoms, and stress caused by the illness, as well as to support the patient and their family throughout the illness process. A team of healthcare professionals provides palliative care who works collaboratively to achieve the patient's physical, emotional, spiritual, and social needs. Depending on the patient's needs, the team may include physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains, and other specialists. End-of-life care is frequently associated with palliative care, but it is not limited to this stage of the illness. Palliative care can be provided at any stage of a serious illness, from the time of diagnosis to the moment of death. In existence, palliative care is the most effective when it is introduced early in the disease's development, as it allows for better management of symptoms and stronger support for the patient and their family.

Principles of palliative care

The key principles of palliative care include:

Relief of pain and other symptoms: Palliative care aims to manage pain and other symptoms associated with the illness. It involves a comprehensive assessment of the patient's symptoms and the management of various medications, therapies, and interventions to interact with people.

Holistic care: Palliative care contains more than the treatment of physical symptoms, but also the patient's and their family's emotional, social, and spiritual needs.

Communication: Effective communication is essential in palliative care. It involves open and reliable discussions between the patient, their family, and the healthcare team about the illness, treatment options, and long-term care objectives.

Shared decision-making: Palliative care involves a collaborative approach to decision-making. The patient, their family, and the healthcare team collaborate to decide based on knowledge about the patient's care.

Support for the family: Palliative care recognizes the critical role that family members perform in the patient's care. Palliative care teams provide support and education to family members to help them better understand the illness.

Palliative care has numerous advantages. According to studies, patients who receive palliative care have better symptom management, a higher quality of life, and they are more satisfied with their treatment. Palliative care is also associated with lower hospitalizations, emergency room visits, and overall cost of healthcare. The advantages of palliative care, there are various perceptions about it. One of the strongest preconceptions is that Palliative care is only obtainable for people who are dying. In reality, palliative care can be provided at any stage of a serious illness, and it can be beneficial for patients with chronic illnesses such as heart failure, COPD, or cancer. Another assumption is that palliative care is the same as hospice care. While hospice care is a type of palliative care, it is aimed at individuals who are slowly approaching the end of their lives and are no longer seeking curative treatment. In comparison, palliative care can be provided at any stage of a serious illness, and may be provided along with the curative treatments.

Correspondence to: Geiger Lisa, Department of Medicine and Palliative Care, University of Maryland, Baltimore, United States of America, E-mail: mehnan.i@gmail.com

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