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Palliative care helps patients with terminal illness live better

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Background: Palliative care is treatment of the discomfort, symptoms and stress of terminal illness. It helps to manage symptoms or side effects of medical treatment. The patient and family members are provided with emotional, social and spiritual support to help them with the dying process. Palliative care intends neither to hasten nor postpone death. It provides relief from pain and other distressing symptoms.

Aim: To improve quality of life of patients with terminal illness.

Methods: Quantitative data analysis of 75 patients aged 60-75 years with life-threatening illness. We extract the most distressing symptoms -pain, shortness of breath, fatigue, constipation, nausea, loss of appetite, problems with sleep. All patients had a three months follow up.

Results: Pain was present at all patients, on a various scale. Three complications related symptoms were found at 60% of patients, and 40% of patients had more than three symptoms present. All patients received supportive therapy. Some 72% of patients established a positive impact on the course of illness.

Conclusions: Palliative care refers to the supportive care of patients with life treating illness, as well as the supportive care that is available for family members. The goal is to improve the quality of life of the patient with terminal illness.