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EFPC Workshop

European Forum for Primary Care

Position paper - palliative approach in primary care from European perspective

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Background and Aim: To develop the palliative approach in primary care from European perspective and to give direction to primary care practitioners and health workers to develop this dimension of palliative approach in their own country.

Specific objectives:

- The identification of functions and resources of patient care chain
- Sharing knowledge of effective multi-professional co-operation
- Increase the awareness about the essential competences to palliative care
- Assess the role of family-based palliative care approach and the role of self-care and self-support
- Exchange the information about undergraduate and postgraduate education in palliative care in primary care setting.

Method: After the introduction, the Forum will organise the small group discussion to explore the facilitators and barriers of effective palliative care with the audience and to exchange examples of best practices.

Results: Primary care workers value palliative care as part of their work. Most of the time, patients appreciate the contribution of the GPs, district nurses, physiotherapists, social workers, hospices and lay support, especially if they accessible, take time to listen, allow patient and carers to ventilate their feelings, and make efforts made regarding symptom relief. However, reports from bereaved relatives suggest that palliative care is performed less well in the community than in other settings. GPs express discomfort about their competence to perform palliative care adequately. They tend to miss symptoms which are not treatable by them, or which are less common. However, with appropriate specialist support and facilities, GPs have been shown to deliver sound and effective care.

Conclusions: Formal arrangements engaging primary care workers to work with specialist teams have been shown to improve functional outcomes, patient satisfaction, improve effective use of resources and improve effective behavior in other areas of medicine.