

# Specialization in palliative care

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## **Evolution of palliative care**

Since the beginnings of time, societies have attempted to offer support and comfort to their ill and dying. In medieval times, the term "hospice" was shelter for pilgrims and travelers.

The 1950's witnessed the introduction of a range of important drugs, and a better understanding of the nature of cancer pain.

In last decades, treatments have frequently become excessively aggressive, symptoms have not been controlled and many families have not coped with care of chronic illness. It was clear there is a need for a new specialty focusing on relieving suffering and considering home care.

Palliative care as a specialty was first started with the major effort from Dame Cicely, in London at 1967.

## **Palliative care today**

The field of palliative medicine has made great recent advances, in terms of recognition as a distinct specialty with a specialized field of knowledge, increased availability of services, and increasingly sophisticated and prevalent curricula. In fact, never before in the history of medicine have we had the power and understanding to relieve suffering to the degree that is possible today.

## **What is next?**

Traditionally, medical care has been articulated as having two mutually exclusive goals: either to cure disease and prolong life or to provide comfort care. Given this dichotomy, the decision to focus on reducing suffering is made only after life-prolonging treatment has been ineffectual and death is imminent. Since early 1990s, palliative care is recognized to be an integral part at all stages of any chronic or life threatening illness.

Instead of viewing palliative care as adjuvant therapy, we should advocate for an interdisciplinary approach that attends to psychosocial issues, advance care planning, and symptom management; the essence of palliative care for all suitable patients.

The future of palliative medicine will depend on our ability to create, nurture and sustain the next generation of palliative medicine leadership.

## **Palliative care at King Hussein Cancer Center -Jordan. Building palliative care program at developing country.**

The King Hussein Cancer Center (KHCC) is not-for-profit. The only specialized cancer center in the Middle East Founded in 1997.

New palliative care service started on September 2004. The mission was to give a comprehensive palliative care service. The vision was to be a model for palliative care in the Middle East meeting international standards.

As we started our program, we started to face a lot of challenges.

The palliative care program as a concept is not known by the population and the professional people. We need more training to our staff in pain management and palliative care.

We are building the program from scratch. We need a clear system, standards, and policies, and guidelines. We need more support from the oncologists, as well as the administration to do our work properly.

When the staff in our team started to feel disappointed and frustrated, we found the magic wisdom... **The best way to predict the future is to make it your self... There are no barriers, but challenges.**

Now, we are proud to have perfect palliative program, which could be a model in the region.