

State of Palliative Care in Egypt

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The past: Palliative care was not recognized until 1984 when the first pain clinic was established, aiming at helping patients with advanced cancer to receive pain medication free of charge. No hospices at that time

The present: Egypt has national guidelines for the management of chronic cancer pain. As well as guidelines for symptoms management including palliative surgery, chemotherapy, and radiotherapy.

The pain clinic at the NCI, Cairo is well equipped with examination and treatment rooms, and dispensary, record keeping and follow-up system.

Other cancer centers in Tanta and El-Menya are in the process of developing pain clinic and terminal care unit.

Regarding hospices, Egypt has a strong family support. The family members do not accept sending the ill person to a hospice; they rather take care of him/her at home. If this patient is in hospital, palliative care will be provided by nurses as other aspects of nursing care. There is one hospice in Cairo developed by the Cairo Evangelical medical society at the Evangelical medical hospital. However, with the increasing number of homes for elderly, this concept may change in the future. Training: Palliative care became included in the oncology nursing program at the National Cancer Institute.

The future: Assessment of community needs for hospices is important, more training for nurses and family members, also training of volunteers. Home-based care should be considered.