

PALLIATIVE CARE AND OPIOIDS

WHAT IS PALLIATIVE CARE?

Palliative care improves the quality of life of patients and their families who are **facing challenges** associated with **life-threatening illness**, whether physical, psychological, social or spiritual.



PALLIATIVE CARE IS NOT LIMITED TO END-OF-LIFE CARE

Palliative care is about **improving quality of life** for patients and their families and aims to **alleviate suffering** for patients with any type of serious health problem including cancer and many other conditions.

PALLIATIVE CARE DOES NOT MEAN SOMEONE IS DYING

Palliative care helps people facing a life-threatening condition. It should begin on the day of diagnosis and **helps alleviate** physical, psychosocial and spiritual **suffering**.



The aim of palliative care is to **relieve suffering** and improve quality of life. It can be provided along with curative treatment.

PALLIATIVE CARE IS NOT ONLY FOR THE PATIENT

It's also for **family, friends, and other care givers**. Palliative care offers a **support system** to help patients and their care givers to live as well and as actively as possible.



Palliative care **offers** psychosocial, spiritual and practical **support** to patients and their care givers.

PAIN SHOULD ALWAYS BE TREATED

It is **important to treat pain** and other physical symptoms. When severe pain is not relieved, it can result in additional health problems.



Furthermore, when pain is left untreated for a long time, it can become more difficult to treat later. **It is important that patients can get the medicines they need** to treat pain, including opioids.

OPIOIDS ARE EFFECTIVE AND SAFE TO USE

When used correctly, studies show that **taking pain medication in palliative care does not lead to addiction**.

Strong opioids, such as morphine, oxycodone or fentanyl **do not shorten life** and remain effective for pain treatment even when used for a long time.



A PALLIATIVE CARE TEAM HELPS BOTH THE BODY AND THE MIND



Palliative care is best provided by a **multi-disciplinary team** including doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists and spiritual/religious counsellors so that **all the needs of the patient and their care givers are addressed**.



World Health Organization

European Region