Pediatric Palliative Care in Kyrgyzstan: ADAPT Profile

The Assessing Doctors’ Attitudes on Palliative Treatment (ADAPT) study was conducted in 2019, in collaboration with local stakeholders. The study identified physician access, knowledge, and perceptions on palliative care integration for children with cancer as outlined by the World Health Organization (WHO) guide in 2018. The study received 424 physician responses from 11 countries. (For published references, see p.2.)

WHO Guide for Pediatric Palliative Care

Palliative care is defined by the WHO as the prevention and relief of patient suffering and the “ethical responsibility of health systems” that “should be integrated with and complement prevention, early diagnosis and treatment.”

Palliative care improves treatment outcomes such as:
- Improved quality of life
- Better pain control and symptom management
- Decreased hospitalizations and fewer days in the intensive care unit

Palliative care integrated into health care systems at all levels and home care reduce health care costs by:
- Decreasing unnecessary resource utilization
- Being less expensive
- Yielding better outcomes.

For additional information:

Access to Pediatric Palliative Care

- 25% physicians reported having no access to palliative care consultation in their practice
- 56% indicated that palliative care consultation is not available when they feel it is needed for children with cancer
- 44% felt that palliative care was involved too late in the treatment of a child with cancer

Physician Perspectives on Actual vs. Ideal Timing of Initial Palliative Care Consultation

Eurasia Regional Differences by Country: % physicians reporting no access to palliative care consultation

Regional range in access: 18-96%

Barriers to Early Palliative Care Integration

Physicians in Kyrgyzstan indicated that lack of home-based services, perceived family resistance, limited access, and limited physician knowledge are the most significant barriers to palliative care consultation for children with cancer.

% physicians indicating the following barriers as important:

Lack of home-based services 88%
Family resistance 85%
Limited access 80%
Limited physician knowledge 80%
Physician discomfort 75%
Time constraints 75%
Prognosis uncertainty 75%
Physician desire to maintain hope 70%
Cost 65%

For additional information:
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Physician Confidence in Delivering Palliative Care

62% do not feel confident assessing and treating the physical needs of pediatric patients with serious incurable illness.

31% do not feel confident assessing and treating the emotional needs of pediatric patients with serious incurable illness and their families.

44% do not feel confident providing grief and bereavement care to the families of children who die.

44% feel burdened by their inability to control the suffering of children at the end-of-life.

% of correct answers by content category:

- Timing of consultation: 63%
- Inter-disciplinary communication: 77%
- Misconceptions: 78%
- Patient suffering: 83%
- Family Communication: 47%

Median score for palliative care knowledge in accordance with WHO guide: 71%

- 69% reported no previous palliative care education

94% wished to have more education on how to provide palliative care to their patients.

Physician Knowledge

Strengths

1. Strong desire among physicians (94%) for more palliative care education
2. Deep understanding of the potential of palliative care to improve quality of life for children with cancer

Recommended Country Next Steps

1. Increase access to pediatric palliative care consultations and other multi-disciplinary specialists in inpatient and outpatient settings
2. Develop national guidelines and institutional policies to optimize the timing of pediatric palliative care integration for children with cancer
3. Create opportunities for accredited training in pediatric palliative care for physicians, as well as psychologists, nurses, and social workers
4. Create didactic and clinical training, focusing on family communication and timing of integration, to increase physician confidence providing all components of pediatric palliative care

Regional Implementation of ADAPT in Eurasia

1. Regionally adapted pediatric palliative care curriculum based on identified knowledge gaps
2. Eurasian working group on palliative care through the Eurasian Alliance in Pediatric Oncology (EurADO)

References and Additional Information


Barriers to the early integration of palliative care in pediatric oncology in 11 Eurasian countries. Cancer 2020; 126(22): 4984-4993.

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