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

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

% of physicians indicating the following barriers as important:

- Limited access
- Lack of home-based services
- Family resistance
- Limited physician knowledge
- Physician desire to maintain hope
- Prognosis uncertainty
- Physician discomfort
- Time constraints
- Cost

Completed responses in Ukraine: 31
**Physician Confidence in Delivering Palliative Care**

- **45%** do not feel confident assessing and treating the physical needs of pediatric patients with serious incurable illness.
- **42%** do not feel confident assessing and treating the emotional needs of pediatric patients with serious incurable illness and their families.
- **65%** do not feel confident providing grief and bereavement care to the families of children who die.
- **65%** feel burdened by their inability to control the suffering of children at the end-of-life.

**Physician Knowledge**

- **90%** reported no previous palliative care education
- **94%** wished to have more education on how to provide palliative care to their patients.
- **Median score for palliative care knowledge in accordance with WHO guide: 72%**

**Strengths**

1. Strong desire among physicians (94%) for more palliative care education
2. Increased government financial and institutional support for palliative care in 2020

**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 policies and institutional guidelines to optimize the timing of pediatric palliative care integration for children with cancer
3. Create didactic and clinical training to increase physician confidence in providing all components of palliative care to children with cancer

**Regional Implementation of ADAPT**

1) Regionally adapted pediatric palliative care curriculum based on identified knowledge gaps
2) 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.

For more information, please contact: Eurasia@stjude.org