

Pediatric Palliative Care in Costa Rica: ADAPT Profile

- The Assessing Doctors' Attitudes on Palliative Treatment (ADAPT) study was conducted in 2020, 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 **874 physician responses from 17 countries** (for published references, see p.2.).

PALLIATIVE CARE: 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

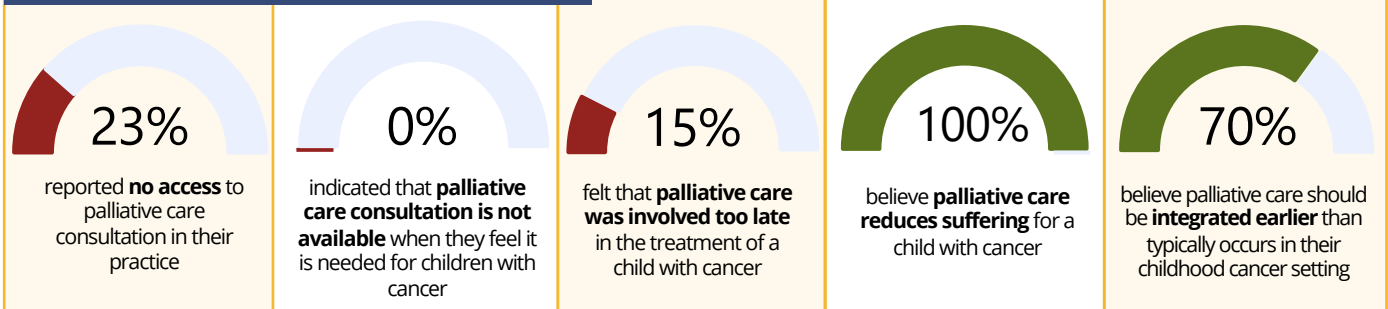
Palliative care integrated into health care systems at all levels and home care reduce health care costs by:

- Decreasing unnecessary resource utilization
- Being less expensive
- Yielding better outcomes.

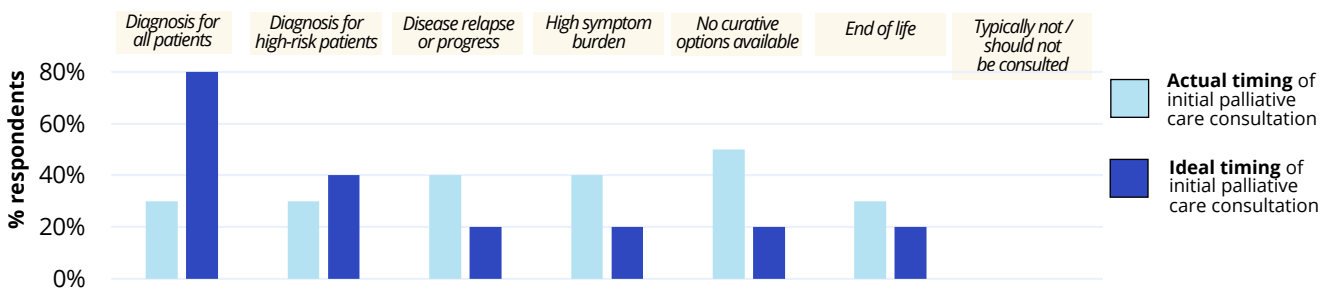
Additional information: *Integrating Palliative Care and Symptom Relief Into Paediatrics: A WHO Guide for Health Care Planners, Implementers and Managers. WHO; 2018.*



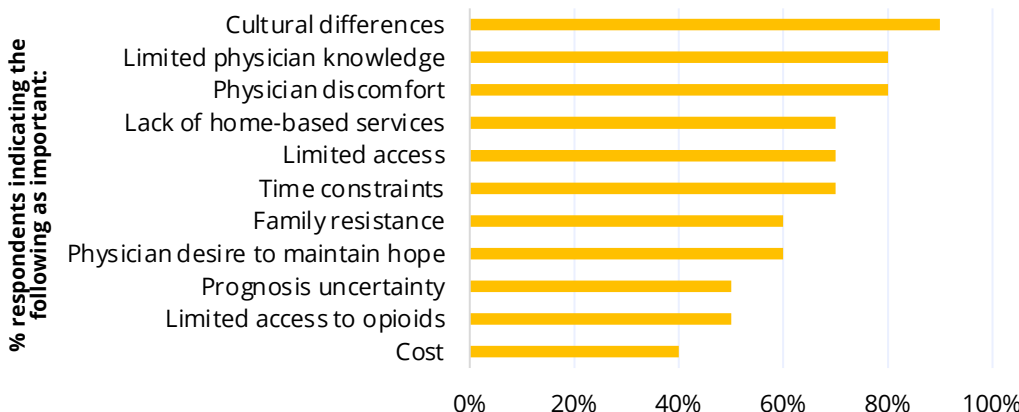
Access to Pediatric Palliative Care



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



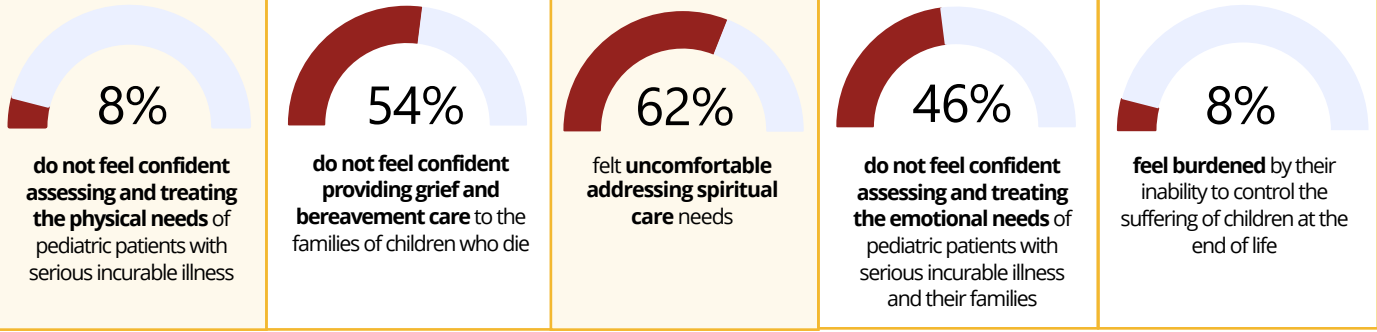
Barriers to Early Palliative Care Integration



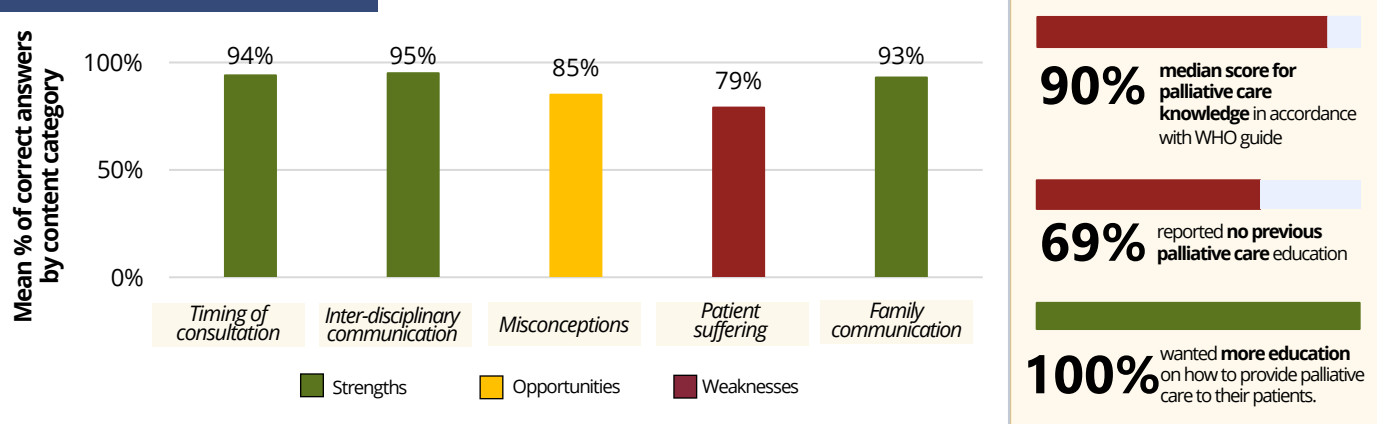
Physicians in Costa Rica indicated that cultural differences, limited physician knowledge, and physician discomfort are the most significant barriers to palliative care consultation for children with cancer.



Physician Confidence in Delivering Palliative Care



Physician Knowledge



Strengths

- General alignment to WHO guidance (90%)
- Palliative care consultation is generally available when needed for children with cancer (100%)
- Strong desire among physicians for more palliative care education (100%)

Recommended Next Steps for Costa Rica

- Conduct further research to investigate the discrepancy between actual vs. ideal timing of palliative care consultation
- Create interdisciplinary palliative care teams to meet the grief and bereavement and spiritual needs of patients and families
- Expand training opportunities on the delivery of culturally-appropriate palliative care to meet the needs of patients and families from diverse communities
- Integrate palliative care education into medical school, residency, and fellowship curricula, focusing on improving communication with patients and families in pediatric cancer care

Regional Implementation of ADAPT in Costa Rica

- Country-adapted pediatric palliative care curriculum based on identified knowledge gap
- Working with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) on their initiatives in palliative care

References and Additional Information

Ehrlich BS, Movsisyan N, Batmunkh T, Kumirova E, Borisevich MV, Kirgizov K, Graetz DE, McNeil MJ, Yakimkova T, Vinitzky A, Ferrara G. A multicountry assessment in Eurasia: Alignment of physician perspectives on palliative care integration in pediatric oncology with World Health Organization guidelines. *Cancer*. 2020 Aug 15;126(16):3777-87.

Ehrlich BS, Movsisyan N, Batmunkh T, Kumirova E, Borisevich MV, Kirgizov K, Graetz DE, McNeil MJ, Yakimkova T, Vinitzky A, Ferrara G. Barriers to the early integration of palliative care in pediatric oncology in 11 Eurasian countries. *Cancer*. 2020 Nov 15;126(22):4984-93.

McNeil MJ, Ehrlich BS, Wang H, Vedaraju Y, Bustamante M, Dussel V, Friedrich P, Garcia Quintero X, Gillipelli SR, Gomez Garcia W, Graetz DE, Kaye EC, Metzger ML, Sabato Danon CV, Devidas M, Baker JN, Agulnik A; Assessing Doctors' Attitudes on Palliative Treatment (ADAPT) Latin America Study Group. Physician Perceptions of Palliative Care for Children With Cancer in Latin America. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2022 Mar 1;5(3):e221245.