

PALLIATIVE CARE:
HOW CAN THE HEALTH SYSTEM ANSWER THE NEED?



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ABSTRACT

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This thesis has the objective to explore the implications leading to the question if the health care system can answer the need regarding palliative care and how the need can be met.

During the last decades there have been significant developments in the health care provision, leading to an increasing need of palliative care. The most prominent issues are: the aging of the population and the increasing numbers of cancer and AIDS patients. Elderly people suffer from chronic diseases, which need palliative care. Cancer and AIDS patients also need this care. The need of palliative care will increase in the future and it calls for intervention from policy makers together with the medical professionals.

In the essay I defined palliative care and explained briefly the background of palliative care. I tried to analyze if there is a need for palliative care in Thailand. Eventually I came to the conclusion that there is a need. There will be changes necessary in the health care system to meet

this need, and education will be part of it. The medical profession will have to play a substantial role in these changes and physicians are the people who have the power to introduce change.

The proposal is aimed at creating an addition to the existing curriculum for medical students regarding palliative care and to formulate recommendations about the realization of the implementation of palliative care throughout the health care system of Thailand. The methods used are an inquiry visit of a team to the UK, followed by a survey of final year medical students in Thailand.

Palliative care is realized by teamwork. Nurses are also a member of the team and the data exercise is an exploratory study of which the aim is: to define training needs for Thai nurses related to palliative care. Semi-structured interviews were carried out, together with an observation exercise. The result is a suggestion to take following points into consideration when looking at the curriculum for Thai nurses: pain management and symptom management; spiritual care in Buddhism; coping with own feelings regarding death and dying and related communication skills.

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