

CANCER PATIENTS PROBLEMS FROM THE PROSPECT OF THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS IN THE ALBANIA REGIONAL HOSPITALS

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Abstract

Number of terminal cancer patients is significantly increased in Albania. Meanwhile palliative care service, as a service that addresses their demands is very limited in primary health care service and it doesn't exist in the secondary (hospitals) health care. The field experts proposed to integrate (PC) in the secondary service, but these required an assessment of the capacities of the regional hospitals to provide it, where measurement of the level of the knowledge on (PC) of the health professionals working in the regional hospitals was one of the main pillars of the assessment. A detailed questionnaire measuring the level of perception, knowledge and attitudes on cancer patients' issues and treatment was delivered to 267 doctors and nurses in 11 regional hospitals. From the data collection we analyzed that more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the subjects agrees that terminal patients do not benefit the proper health care service from the government. 55% of the subjects assert that have heard about palliative care, but could not define it. 25% of doctors and nurses prioritize patients physical and psychological problems compare to social and economical one. Meanwhile 50% of them believe that cancer patients experience physical, psychological, social and economical problems. Quite 90% of subjects believe that that terminal patients need to have free medications. There are some differences between professions, specialization and the region regarding the level of the knowledge on the terminal cancer issues. There is a need to increase the level of knowledge of health professionals on the cancer patient's issues especially in some regional hospitals.

Keywords: *cancer patients, health care professionals, palliative care, regional hospitals*