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Hospice – care, compassion, dignity

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Anna Frendo



open is palliative care?

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Organisation (Palliative care News, 5 August 2020).

Palliative care has been with us since the beginning of time as caring for persons with serious illnesses has always been part of living. However, throughout the years, palliative care has evolved into a speciality on its own and the following are among a number of points brought up by the World Health Organisation.

- “The global need for palliative care will continue to grow as a result of the ageing of populations and the rising burden of noncommunicable diseases and some communicable diseases”
- “Early delivery of palliative care reduces unnecessary hospital admissions and the use of health services”

The role of Hospice Malta to reach out to all who require palliative care in Malta and Gozo

Hospice Malta offers a range of services to meet the challenges that patients with advanced progressive chronic disease and their families have to face on a daily basis. Patients suffering from cancer, motor neurone disease, chronic progressive cardiac, renal respiratory and liver failure are entitled to free of charge Hospice services. Currently we are also planning to include other diseases.

These services are delivered by a team of professionals with the support of volunteers. The contribution of care by the Hospice Malta care team includes an in-depth medical, psychosocial and spiritual assessment followed by an individualised care plan to identify and address medical and practical concerns as well as psycho social and spiritual situations for both the patient and their families. The way forward is for these services to be increased, boosted and consolidated through St Michael's Hospice.

Hospice is constantly evaluating its services with the aim to identify gaps in the service followed up by planning and implementation of new or upgraded services. In preparation for St Michael's new complex, Hospice is also in the process of reviewing the existing Palliative care policies and procedures and working towards introducing new policies and procedures required for the smooth running of this project which shall include an upgraded community and Day therapy service as well as In-patient unit, clinics and education Department. These policies together with key performance indicators shall also be in place to measure the quality of the services, with regular reviews and upgrades as necessary according to the ongoing development of palliative care worldwide.

Hospice is also looking to enhance palliative care education in Malta and we believe that this needs to be integrated in pre- and post-graduation training for all health and social care professionals. Hospice is already established as a palliative care educator, but shall further develop the education department to cater for ongoing training to all hospice staff and other health care/social care professionals by offering palliative care training on a basic and advanced level.

The future of Hospice Palliative Care in Malta shall include:

- Working towards access to all necessary medication in the community setting
- open 24/7 medical support through St Michael Palliative Care Complex, which will be

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- Inclusion of telehealth to reach out to more patients and families

It can be emotionally challenging for the Hospice team to encounter such situations on a daily basis. The team is encouraged by the positive response that they receive from most families. One of the many thank you messages that we get reads as follows: "We are truly grateful for the support you gave and are still giving us; your kind manner and guidance allowed us to care for her better."

All the present and future services require more human and financial resources and as recommended by WHO, "Allocation and procurement of appropriate funds for resource, capacity and manpower building" are imperative for the present provision of palliative care in the community and future endeavours such as St Michael's Hospice.

Hospice Malta is a full member of the [Malta Health Network](#)

Anna Frendo, acting Clinical Services manager at Hospice Malta

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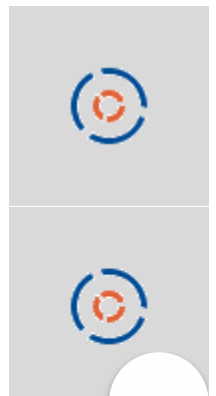
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Gerry Cowie • 12 days ago

The Hospice movement is a wonderful thing. Hospices provide great palliative care, where many might opt for euthanasia, and indeed some are pushing for it here. Patients are well treated and afforded great dignity and peace at the end of their earthly lives.

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