

Integrating palliative care and symptom relief into paediatrics

A WHO guide for health care planners, implementers and managers



World Health
Organization

Integrating palliative care and symptom relief into paediatrics: a WHO guide for health care planners, implementers and managers

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Foreword

The World Health Assembly has resolved that providing access to palliative care for children is “an ethical responsibility of health systems” (Annex 1) and that integration of palliative care into public health-care systems is essential for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal on universal health coverage (WHA 67.19). Yet access to paediatric palliative care and symptom relief is very rare in a number of countries. As a result, millions of the world’s vulnerable children suffer unnecessarily each year.

A wide range of childhood health problems can generate the need for palliative care and symptom relief including not only advanced noncommunicable disease (Annex 2) and HIV/AIDS, but also severe prematurity, birth trauma, congenital anomalies, severe non-progressive disabilities such as paraplegia and quadriplegia, drug-resistant tuberculosis and injuries. Paediatric palliative care requires special knowledge and skills, and it is essential that all providers of primary health care for children and paediatric specialty care possess these competencies.

This document is part of a series of WHO publications on palliative care. Their objective is not to provide clinical guidelines, but rather practical guidance on integrating palliative care and symptom relief into health care systems. The current publication is intended to assist anyone involved with planning, implementing, managing or assuring the quality of health care for children to integrate palliative care and symptom relief such that the quality of life of children and their families will be improved, health-care systems will be strengthened and cost-effective models of service provision will be implemented.

With this guide, WHO reiterates its commitment to answering the needs and expectations of all people, especially the most vulnerable.



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Abbreviations and acronyms

AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency virus
APCA	African Palliative Care Association
CFHI	Child Friendly Healthcare Initiative
CHC	community health centre
CHW	community health worker
EAPC	European Association for Palliative Care
EP Ped	Essential Package of Palliative Care for Paediatrics and Symptom Relief
GP	general practitioner
HIC	high-income country
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
ICPCN	International Children's Palliative Care Network
IDT	interdisciplinary [palliative care] team
INCB	International Narcotics Control Board
LMIC	low- and middle-income country
MoH	Ministry of Health
NCD	noncommunicable disease
NGO	nongovernmental organization
PHC	primary health care
PPC	paediatric palliative care
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SSRI	selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor
UHC	universal health coverage
UN	United Nations
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization

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