

Who We Are

Vision

To contribute to a Namibian healthcare ecosystem where quality palliative care services are developed, supported and integrated, ensuring that all Namibian patients in need have access to compassionate, holistic care.

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What is Palliative and Hospice Care?

What is Palliative Care?

Palliative care is specialised medical care focused on providing relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress of serious illnesses such as cancer. Unlike treatments aimed at curing a disease, palliative care is designed to improve the quality of life for patients and their families, regardless of the stage of the illness or the need for other therapies.

Key Elements of Palliative Care:

Symptom Management: Palliative care addresses physical symptoms such as pain, fatigue, nausea, shortness of breath, and difficulty sleeping, helping patients feel more comfortable and improving their day-to-day well-being.

Psychosocial Support: It provides emotional and psychological support, recognising that serious illness impacts both the mental and emotional health of patients and their families. Trained professionals, including counsellors and social workers, offer guidance and support.

Support for Families: Palliative care extends to caregivers and family members, offering resources and counselling to help them manage stress, communicate with healthcare teams, and make difficult decisions about care.

Coordination with Other Treatments: This care works alongside curative treatments if needed, and it is provided by a team that may include doctors, nurses, social workers and chaplains. The team collaborates with other specialists to ensure a holistic approach to the patient's care.

End-of-Life Care: For terminally ill patients, palliative care can transition to hospice care, which focuses on comfort and support during the final stages of life.



Palliative care focuses on dignity, comfort and emotional support, aiming to improve the quality of life for people facing serious illnesses.

What is Hospice Care? A type of compassionate care designed for people in the final stages of a terminal illness.

Its primary focus is on providing comfort, dignity and support to patients whose illnesses are no longer responding to curative treatment. Hospice care prioritises the quality of life over the length of life and involves managing symptoms, providing emotional and spiritual support, and offering resources for families and caregivers.

Key Aspects of Hospice Care:

Comfort-Focused Care: Hospice care emphasises relief from pain, symptoms and stress. The goal is to make the patient as comfortable as possible rather than attempting to cure or slow the progression of the illness.

Holistic Support: Hospice care includes physical, emotional, social and spiritual support. This might include pain management, help with daily activities, counselling, and guidance from a chaplain or spiritual counsellor if desired.

Family Involvement and Support: Hospice care extends to families and caregivers, offering counselling, bereavement support, and respite care. It helps family members and loved ones understand the care process and to cope with the emotional challenges of losing a loved one.

Interdisciplinary Team Approach: A team of healthcare professionals—typically including doctors, nurses, social workers and chaplains—works together to create a personalised care plan. This team supports both the patient and family, addressing all aspects of well-being.

Location Flexibility: Hospice care can be provided in various settings, such as the patient's home, a specialised hospice facility, nursing home, or hospital, depending on the needs and preferences of the patient and family.

End-of-Life Focus: Hospice care is intended for those who are in the final phase of life, usually when a physician has determined that the patient has six months or less to live. However, patients can remain in hospice care beyond six months if the illness progresses slowly.

Hospice care respects the wishes and dignity of the patient, focusing on comfort and support rather than curative interventions. It is intended to provide a peaceful and supportive environment for patients and their families during this sensitive time.



Mission

To foster a national commitment to palliative and hospice care, advocating for a patient-centred approach that empowers patient autonomy. We aim to promote an interdisciplinary team approach to care, ensuring that palliation and hospice care services provide comprehensive support to patients and their families.

Services Offered

Symptom and Pain Management

Managing symptoms like pain, nausea, shortness of breath and fatigue is central to palliative care. The care team tailors treatments to control symptoms effectively, ensuring patients are as comfortable as possible.

Psychosocial Support

Chronic illness can lead to psychological challenges such as depression, anxiety and stress. Palliative care provides emotional support and counselling to help patients and families cope with these difficulties.

Spiritual and Cultural Support

Palliative care respects the beliefs, values and traditions of the patient and family. Spiritual care may include guidance from a chaplain or other spiritual advisors, helping patients find peace and fulfilment.

Advance Care Planning and Decision-Making Support

Palliative care teams assist patients in making informed decisions about their treatment preferences. This includes advance directives and end-of-life care planning, empowering patients to communicate their wishes.

Family and Caregiver Support

Illnesses affect entire families, not just the patient. Palliative care teams offer education, resources and counselling to help families understand the patient's condition and learn how to provide care.

Coordination of Care

Palliative care involves coordinating between different healthcare providers to ensure that all aspects of the patient's needs are met. This helps streamline care, minimise hospital admissions, and facilitate smoother transitions across different settings (e.g., from hospital to home).

Bereavement Support

Some palliative care services offer support to families after a loved one's passing, helping them cope with grief through counselling and support groups.

Contact Details

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Dr A. Zietsman, Dr C. Likando and CAN CEO Mr. R. Hansen
at the Opening of Palliative Care Namibia on Friday, 5 April 2024.

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