

MCS II Selective Hospice as Palliative Care

This selective will present the role of hospice in the terminal care of the dying. As palliative care, hospice offers a method of care that has become mainstream, unlike it had been in the early days of modern medicine.

Instructor

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Syllabus

The hospice philosophy, our own death awareness, the interdisciplinary team approach and many significant issues the physician faces as the patient and family enter this period of crisis are all explored. Presentation methods include film, discussion, text and experiential explorations with an emphasis on group interaction.

The course will provide useful and relevant methodology as we explore how each of us approaches the terminal patient and the journey we are privileged to accompany them through. The opportunity to interact with an experienced medical oncologist, as well as the entire interdisciplinary team during a weekly meeting (when available) provide an in-depth view of the challenges of caring for the terminal patient and family.

Educational Objectives

At the conclusion of this course you will have the ability to:

1. Understand how our own life experiences impact on the patient/physician relationship and how to best serve the patient and family.
2. Describe the hospice approach to the care of the terminally ill patient and the interdisciplinary team members and their roles.
3. Articulate the function of the physician in the final stages of the terminal care and how it impacts on the patient's well-being and ultimately how the patient and family approach the life crisis.

Topics

Session I

Hospice overview: How care is delivered and paid for, the interdisciplinary team approach, the role of compassion and why does it matter to a second year medical student?

Death Awareness: How our own life experiences impact on our relationship with patients. Do you remember your first experience with death? Have you had that experience as a clinician yet?

Discussion around each of these topics as well as a chance to initiate discussion on any related topic.

Session II

Breaking the Bad News: Physicians face the challenging role of breaking bad news, treating or referring their patient and watching the inevitable terminal process. For many, this raises important personal questions. How do I tell her/him? When do I “give up”? Who is to blame? Concrete examples are discussed with open dialogue and interaction is strongly encouraged.

Session III

Pain and Symptom Management: A brief overview of the medications used for the terminal patient and some of the challenges faced, along with age-old myths about modalities and morphine.

Session IV

Team meeting: Attendance is mandatory off campus at a community-based hospice office. This is an opportunity to observe and be a part of the hospice interdisciplinary team meeting. This meeting is subject to change in day/time of attendance AND availability of a participating hospice agency. In that event, the session will be replaced with an in-depth overview of the IDT format coupled with an experiential group exercise.

Evaluation

Evaluation is based on participation and attendance with an emphasis on an electronic journal submission weekly; reaction in nature. This submission is required, not optional.

Class Size

6-10