

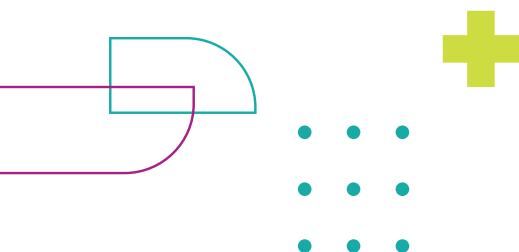


Palliative care as safe alternatives to improve the quality of life and well-being of a cancer patient

Author: Dr. Maricelly Santiago Ortiz
Researcher, cancer educator and health communicator
Alivia Health

The National Cancer Institute defines quality of life as a series of values and expectations with which patients perceive themselves and others. This includes parts of life such as: spiritual, physical, social and emotional spheres, among others. When taking care of our patients, we need to educate ourselves about the possibilities and alternatives at our disposal to be able to assist in a cancer diagnosis. It is important to incorporate palliative care on time for better results for the patient and their caregivers. Palliative care is the route of treatment that is used to improve the quality of life of patients who have a disease that is classified as serious or that the patient feels that their life is at high risk, such as cancer. Such care in the field of medicine and research is also called symptom control care or comfort care. The objective with palliative care is to be able to treat or alleviate the side effects of clinical treatments. Palliative care can be implemented from the moment of cancer diagnosis, during clinical treatment or at the end of a patient's life.

The oncologist is generally the one who suggests and leads these efforts together with the patient's family and experts in the areas that the patient needs care such as: nutritionists, psychologists, social workers, oncologist nurses and chaplains, among others. It should be noted that when a patient receives any type of palliative care, the patient may also continue to receive clinical treatment for cancer. Palliative care can generally be received in outpatient clinics, care centers, doctor's offices, hospitals or in the patient's home if the patient chooses. If the patient and their family decide that this care is to be received at home, it must be outlined and directed by an oncologist. However, like any process or diagnosis, we can find challenges that we must face with caution because the effects that clinical treatments may have on a patient are very different from one patient to another. That is why a certified specialist must address each of the ways a patient diagnosed with cancer has been affected and it is recommended to establish a legal document that establishes what palliative care the patient wishes to receive during their diagnosis in the event that the patient does not have the capacity to delegate it to a family member to make those important decisions. Notably, research conducted and disseminated by the New England Journal of Medicine and the American Association of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) recommends that all patients with advanced cancer receive palliative care and that rapid integration of palliative care in cancer patients can improve their quality of life and mood, and can prolong survival. In Puerto Rico, we have more than 60,000 cancer survivors and, with the arrival of new treatment and encouragement alternatives, we foresee that the amount of survivors will increase.



Always by  ***your side***