

Building Community Capacity for End of Life Care: A Public Health approach

This lecture will commence with some preliminary remarks about the globally widespread clinical, acute-care culture of palliative care and the common myths and distortions in the idea of 'community' as traditionally used by this style of palliative care before then introducing an outline of public health/health promotion approaches to palliative care. I will then introduce a public health approach to palliative care as one that addresses the social, psychological and spiritual troubles that people living with dying, living with bereavement, and living with long term care. These 'co-morbidities are all amenable to prevention, harm reduction, and early intervention by public health methods. These interventions embrace community development, health promotion, death education, and ecological strategies. I will argue that the future of palliative care must embrace this approach if it is to successfully achieve greater access for all and provide a meaningful continuity of care at the end of life. Global examples of these methods will be described.