

SAMS Closing Symposium: Research in Palliative Care 2014-2018

Where is Spiritual Care?

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WHO Definition of Palliative Care

Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problem associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and **spiritual**. Palliative care:

- > (...)
- > integrates the psychological and **spiritual aspects of patient care**;
- > (...)
- > uses a **team approach** to address the needs of patients and their families, including bereavement counselling, if indicated;

- > Despite the precise definition, we still have to improve teamwork skills to develop a real multidisciplinary team approach.
- > So – where is spiritual care?
- > Short intro to two projects:
 - > - Dissertation by Lukas Stuck: „Seelsorge für Menschen mit Demenz. Praktisch-theologische Perspektiven im Kontext von spiritueller Begleitung»
 - > - IRC-Project Noth/Znoj/Lampe: „spiritual struggles“

Religious and Spiritual Struggles – Joint Research Project between Health Psychology and Spiritual Care

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The spiritual dimension in the WHO resolution on Palliative Care

- > 1984: Resolution WHA37.13 “The spiritual dimension in the global strategy for health for all by the year 2000“

- > 2014: Resolution WHA67.19 “Strengthening of palliative care as a component of comprehensive care throughout the life course“

- > Concerns:
 - Human Rights Language
 - Drugs
 - Spiritual Care

The spiritual dimension in the WHO resolution on Palliative Care

Typical concerns:

- > “Well, is that actually a health issue?”
- > “WHO’s health definition of 1946 talks about biopsychosocial, but not about spiritual factors.”
- > “If you're asking a person from Thailand, where spirituality is everywhere, you will get different answers than in Africa, they have Voodoo, and Europeans go either to Church or to Shastra. There is no clear definition what spirituality is.”
- > “Isn’t this about euthanasia?”
- > “If you need chaplains in a hospital, who pays for that?”

The spiritual dimension in the WHO resolution on Palliative Care

Coalition:



The spiritual dimension in the WHO resolution on Palliative Care

Resolution:

- > „Acknowledging that palliative care is an ethical responsibility of health systems, and that it is the ethical duty of health care professionals to alleviate pain and suffering, whether physical, psychosocial or **spiritual**, irrespective of whether the disease or condition can be cured“
- > Call for „(...) continuing education on palliative care (...), including health care workers, caregivers addressing patients' **spiritual needs** and social workers (...)“