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## **Palliative care: Supporting adult cancer patients in Ibadan, Nigeria**

**Soyannwo O A, Aikomo O and Maboreje O**  
University College Hospital, Nigeria

**Introduction:** Over 70% of adult cancer patients present late to hospital in Nigeria with devastating consequences. Yet, structured palliative care is only an emerging service in this country with population of over 160 million.

**Objective:** To describe activities of the Ibadan palliative care group and review one year holistic care programme offered by the team to support patients and their families.

**Methodology:** A retrospective study reviewed treatment notes of patients that were enrolled from January to December 2013. Information retrieved included bio-data, stage of cancer, presenting complaints, palliative care issues identified, services rendered, days on programme, outcome and challenges.

**Results:** Structured palliative care service consisting hospital based care, day care and home based care commenced in 2008, being the first of such in Nigeria. The service was based at the University College Hospital, Ibadan and run in collaboration with Centre for Palliative care Nigeria, a non-governmental organization. 189 patients were seen within the year and 121 (64 %) were adults with advanced cancer. There were 44 (36.4%) male and 77 (63.6%) female with age range 21 to 91 years. 89 (73.6%) had moderate to severe pain. Psychosocial issues were present in 51.2% and spiritual issues in 17.4%. Services that were offered despite major challenges of late referral and financial constraints provided pain and symptom control, counselling, education for patients and family, financial and spiritual support thus improving quality of life

**Conclusion:** Patients and their families found that palliative care provided relief to pain and suffering. More can be achieved through training of more health professionals, increased public awareness of the services and government support.

### **Biography**

Soyannwo O A is a Professor of anaesthesia and Consultant anaesthetist. She obtained the MBSS degree from University of Ibadan, Medical school in 1971, She had her Post-graduate specialist training at the University College Hospital, Ibadan, Royal College of Surgeons, London, Royal Liverpool Hospital, Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, London, Walton Centre for Neurology and Neurosurgery, Liverpool Marie Curie Centre (Hospice), End of life Observatory Lancaster University and Hospice Africa, Uganda. She rose through the academic ladder and was promoted to Professor in 1998. Her areas of scientific research interest include pain and palliative care, paediatrics anaesthesia and manpower development. She has published over 100 scientific articles and supervised several postgraduate students. She is currently the leader of the Ibadan Hospice and palliative care group bringing relief and succour to adults and children with chronic illnesses including end of life care and support for their families. She has received several awards including the honorary Fellowship (the highest award) of the international Association for the study of Pain for her immense contributions to pain management, education and research in Africa.

[folait2001@yahoo.com](mailto:folait2001@yahoo.com)

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