

4th International Conference on

Palliative Care, Medicine and Hospice Nursing

August 27-28, 2018 | Boston, USA

Through the introduction of palliative care, quality of life has improved and the course of illness has been positively influenced thus leading to an increase in referrals

Julia Ambler

Umduduzi – Hospice Care for Children, South Africa

Palliative care should be provided from the point of diagnosis and beyond death. However, within the South African context, palliative care is poorly understood. Many practitioners believe it to be synonymous with the end of life care or ‘giving up’ and are thus reluctant to refer early to the team. Through our work, we have come to realize that this misunderstanding is common and is not specific to any discipline. In addition to this, palliative care is not a recognized specialty in South Africa hence there are limited numbers of health professionals trained in palliative care. As they cannot specialize in the field, there are no government posts. Currently, almost all palliative care services are offered by the not-for-profit / non-governmental sectors (NPO/NGO). The authors have compiled a retrospective case study analysis of their patient base. They have explored how presenting palliative care cases to health care professionals at academic meetings has led to increased referrals. Referrals are also being made earlier in the course of illness. Healthcare professionals, when they have seen the benefits of palliative care, are more inclined to recognize the need for a palliative care approach and refer earlier. Through their interactions with the palliative care team, health care professionals have been empowered and are more willing to provide palliative care themselves, accessing the team for telephonic support. Discussing and presenting such case studies with and to health care professionals improves referrals and thus improves access to palliative care.

Biography

Julia graduated from University of Cape Town with her MBChB in 1998. She trained and worked as a general practitioner and a children’s hospice doctor at Helen and Douglas Houses in Oxford, the UK for 6 years. On returning to Durban, she continued her passion for pediatric palliative care and is Deputy Director of Umduduzi – Hospice Care for Children. Through this NPO she consults in children’s palliative care and trains health professionals and medical students in the Department of Paediatrics, UKZN.

julia@umduduzi.co.za

Notes: