



## A Note on Pediatric Palliative Oncology

**Prakash A\***

*Osmania Medical College, India*

### Description

PPO is an emerging field that integrates the principles of palliative care early into the illness trajectory of children with cancer. They work with interdisciplinary clinicians to provide optimal medical and psychosocial care to children with cancer and their families.

Ongoing advances in the field of pediatric oncology, including new treatment options for progressive cancers, necessitate the early integration of palliative care tenets including holistic care, high-quality communication, and assessment and management of refractory symptoms.

PPO services are associated with improved symptom management, quality of life for children and families, as well as reduced use of health care resources, chemotherapy, and intensive care. In addition, bereavement outcomes improve when patients have better symptom control, receive less intensive EOL care,

Palliative care in children is a response to their physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs with the aim of improving the quality of life for the children and their families.

It starts with the diagnosis, and can be applied regardless of whether or not the patients received the treatment.

**Symptoms:** Most frequently mentioned physical symptoms were pain, poor appetite, and fatigue. The children's most mentioned psychological symptoms were sadness, difficulty in talking to their parents about their feelings regarding illness and death and fear of being alone.

The symptoms of fear of death of the child and fear of physical symptoms were most frequently mentioned parents' psychological symptoms.

The guiding principles behind offering palliative care to pediatric oncology patients are the prioritization of providing holistic care and management of disease-based symptoms.

Pediatric hematology-oncology nurses and clinicians have a unique responsibility to support the patient and family unit and foster a sense of hope, while also preparing the family for the prognosis and a challenging treatment trajectory that could result in the child's death.

**\*Corresponding author:** Prakash A, Osmania Medical College, India E-mail: [prakash.a@gmail.com](mailto:prakash.a@gmail.com)

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