

Till Death Do Us Part

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Abstract

The sudden onset of a severe disease usually causes great impact not on the person's life in various aspects: biological, social and psychological. When this situation strikes a young and healthy patient the impact is even greater, having, both the family and individual, to develop unique coping mechanisms to deal with the situation.

Keywords: Family doctor; Palliative care; Patient and family support

Introduction

The purpose of this clinical case is to show the role of the family doctor (FD) when it comes to diagnosing and treating a person in the most critical time of her life.

The doctor also as the role of preparing the patient as well as the family. This process can involve curative treatment and palliative care, whatever it takes to improve the quality of life and to guarantee dignity at the time of death [1].

Method

Interview/Family evaluation with patient.

Background and Significance

M.C.S, 56 years old, married, with an only child of 24 years old. The patient was admitted and consulted by her doctor for presenting signs and symptom that were compatible with a sinus headache with three day duration. Three days later, the pain worsened and the patient went to the emergency room. At that time she had a brain CT-scan done that showed a brain mass. Soon after this finding, she was put through many tests and diagnosed with a stage IV Glioblastoma and was proposed for palliative radiotherapy and chemotherapy. Eleven months

after the initial diagnosis her clinical condition worsened and she passed away [2].

During her last year of life, she and her family were cared for by their FD, which played a fundamental role in helping them deal with the suffering, the anger, revolt and acceptance. FD prepared them for a death with dignity and comfort.

Discussion

The role of FD doesn't end at diagnosis or even after treatment. In reality, many times that is exactly where his role begins. Being available to support the patient and their family in every stage of the disease is one of the main functions of those specialized in Family Medicine.

Dealing with new circumstances in life that suddenly emerge, learning to prepare for suffering and giving support to the family when the patient eventually dies, is made easier with the help of the FD who's privileged in understanding the family's individual needs [3,4].

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