

Comparing hospice to palliative care: knowing the difference is important in patient care

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There are 7.4 billion people alive on Earth today (Worldometers, 2016). Life expectancy around the world has increased at a dramatic rate over time and there is no evidence that it will lessen in the future (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). Along with life expectancy, ratios of old to young are increasing (Blair, 2014). An increase of older populations will result in more people living with long-term illnesses and a desire for some level of control over their healthcare choices and end-of-life circumstances. As such healthcare providers are going to be called upon to provide higher levels of hospice and palliative care in the coming years.

Hospice and palliative care is available in every state in the United States of America (USA) and in countries throughout the world. Commonly, many healthcare providers are unaware of the differences between hospice and palliative care. Not knowing the differences between the two specialties has many consequences: uninformed providers may not offer the best form of care for patients; providers may utilize incorrect terminology which frightens patients and their families; patient care may suffer and patients may not receive the best care for their situation.

In this presentation hospice and palliative care, as offered in the USA, will be defined, compared, and analyzed. Attendees will be offered information about the consequences of not being educated on the differences between hospice and palliative care. This will further be related to patient care and how patient care may suffer due to provider lack of knowledge. Lastly, a personal story of the impact of hospice on the lives of the presenter and her family will be shared.

Biography:

Dr. Julie Slade has over 17 years' experience as a nurse with a background in intensive care and hospice nursing. She has spent the last 5 years working in nursing education at Chatham University. Dr. Slade maintains her interest in hospice through her role as membership chairperson for a local chapter of the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association. Additionally, Dr. Slade encourages students to gain the most knowledge possible from their hospice experience. Dr. Slade noted confusion amongst providers and patients between hospice and palliative care and is working towards clearing that confusion for the benefit of excellent patient care.