Improving the Quality of Spiritual Care as a Dimension of Palliative Care:

A Consensus Conference Convened February 2009

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The goal of palliative care is to prevent and relieve suffering (NCP, 2009)

Palliative Care supports the best possible quality of life for patients and their families (NCP, 2009)

Palliative care is viewed as applying to patients from the time of diagnosis of serious illness to death
Consensus Conference Goal

- Identify points of agreement about spirituality as it applies to health care
- Make recommendations to advance the delivery of quality spiritual care in palliative care
- 5 Key Elements of Spiritual Care provided the framework: spiritual assessment; models of care and care plans; interprofessional team training; quality improvement; and personal and professional development
The NCP Guidelines Address Eight Domains of Care:

- Structure and Processes;
- Physical Aspects;
- Psychological and Psychiatric Aspects;
- Social Aspects;
- Spiritual, Religious, and Existential Aspects;
- Cultural Aspects;
- Imminent Death; and
- Ethical and Legal Aspects.
**National Consensus Project Guidelines and National Quality Forum Preferred Practices for the Spiritual Domain**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Consensus Project Guidelines</th>
<th>National Quality Forum Preferred Practices</th>
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| **Spiritual Domain** | **DOMAIN 5.**  
SPRITUAL, RELIGIOUS, AND EXISTENTIAL ASPECTS OF CARE |
| **Guideline 5.1**  
Spiritual and existential dimensions are assessed and responded to based upon the best available evidence, which is skillfully and systematically applied. | **PREFERRED PRACTICE 20**  
Develop and document a plan based on assessment of religious, spiritual, and existential concerns using a structured instrument and integrate the information obtained from the assessment into the palliative care plan. |
| | **PREFERRED PRACTICE 21**  
Provide information about the availability of spiritual care services and make spiritual care available either through organizational spiritual counseling or through the patient’s own clergy relationships. |
| | **PREFERRED PRACTICE 22**  
Specialized palliative and hospice care teams should include spiritual care professionals appropriately trained and certified in palliative care. |
| | **PREFERRED PRACTICE 23**  
Specialized palliative and hospice spiritual care professional should build partnerships with community clergy and provide education and counseling related to end-of-life care. |
• 40 national leaders representing physicians, nurses, psychologists, social workers, chaplains and clergy, other spiritual care providers, and healthcare administrators

• Develop a consensus-driven definition of spirituality

• Make recommendations to improve spiritual care in palliative care settings

• Identify resources to advance the quality of spiritual care

*Consensus Conference Design and Organization*

Consensus Conference on “Improving the Quality of Spiritual Care as a Dimension of Palliative Care”
February 17-18, 2009
Pasadena, CA
Consensus Conference (Cont’d)

- First draft prepared by investigators and advisors.
- Draft sent to conference participants pre course
- Consensus Conference included plenary sessions and working groups with facilitators in one of five identified key areas of spiritual care
“Spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred.”
Post Conference Work Included:

- Synthesis of feedback from small group sessions
- Course evaluations
- Revised Consensus Report was reviewed by the conferences participants, the Advisors and a panel of peer reviewers with a total of 91 reviews submitted
- Final Consensus Report published in Journal of Palliative Medicine, October 2009
Recommendations for improving spiritual care are divided into seven key areas:

I. Spiritual Care Models
II. Spiritual Assessment
III. Spiritual Treatment/Care Plans
IV. Interprofessional Team
V. Training/Certification
VI. Personal and Professional Development
VII. Quality Improvement
I. Spiritual Care Models

Recommendations

• Integral to any patient-centered health care system
• Based on honoring dignity
• Spiritual distress treated the same as any other medical problem
• Spirituality should be considered a “vital sign”
• Interdisciplinary
Inpatient Spiritual Care Implementation Model

Clinicians and Spiritual care providers

**Key**

- Pt. process
- Transformative interaction

**Clinicians:** Chaplains, doctors, nurses, social workers

**Community providers:** Community religious leaders, spiritual directors, pastoral and community counselors, faith community nurses, PRACT, and others

Puchalski, Handzo, Wontz, and Butt, 2009
Outpatient Spiritual Care Implementation Model

Key

- Patient process
- Transformative interaction
- Interprofessional collaboration

Clinicians: Chaplains, doctors, nurses, social workers
Community providers: Community religious leaders, spiritual director, pastoral and community counselors, faith community nurses, PT/OT and others

Puchalski, Handzo, Wints, and Eidt, 2009
The Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Model of Care

II. Spiritual Assessment of Patients and Families

Recommendations

• Spiritual screening
• Assessment tools
• All staff members should be trained to recognize spiritual distress
• HCPs should incorporate spiritual screening as a part of routine history/evaluation
• Formal screening by Board Certified Chaplain
• Documentation
• Follow-up
• Response within 24 hours
Spiritual Diagnosis Decision Pathways

**Spiritual history**
Using FICA or other tool.

- **Disease**
  - **No Disease**
    - **No spiritual issues posing a problem. Follow up at annual exam or change in situation.**
  - **Yes**
    - **Consult medical care and/or Referral to MH/P, social worker**
      - **Follow up with Pt. at next exam or change of situation.**

- **Spiritual component AND also a physical, psychological or social issue present.**
  - **Yes**
    - **Simple spiritual issues?**
      - **Yes**
        - **Spiritual diagnosis-related intervention**
      - **No**
        - **Complex and/or unresolved issue**
          - **Does not Resolve**
            - **Spiritual Care Providers (SCP)**
              - Chaplain
              - Parishioner/Other

- **No**
  - **No spiritual component. A physical, psychological or social issue only is present.**
    - **Yes**
      - **Consult medical care and/or Referral to MH/P, social worker**
    - **No**
      - **In-patient / Chaplain / LTC**

- **Spiritual issue ONLY?**
  - **Yes**
    - **Chaplain**
  - **No**
    - **Chaplain or other SCP**
      - **Chaplain referral to other SCP as indicated**

**SCP follow up with health care professional**

*Source: Puchalski C., Handzo G., Winters, S., and Bull J., 2009*
### Spiritual Assessment Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnoses (Primary)</th>
<th>Key feature from history</th>
<th>Example Statements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existential</td>
<td>Lack of meaning / questions meaning about one’s own existence / Concern about afterlife / Questions the meaning of suffering / Seeks spiritual assistance</td>
<td>“My life is meaningless” “I feel useless”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment God or others</td>
<td>lack of love, loneliness / Not being remembered / No Sense of Relatedness</td>
<td>“God has abandoned me” “No one comes by anymore”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anger at God or others</td>
<td>Displaces anger toward religious representatives / Inability to Forgive</td>
<td>“Why would God take my child…its not fair”</td>
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<td>Concerns about relationship with deity</td>
<td>Closeness to God, deepening relationship</td>
<td>“I want to have a deeper relationship with God”</td>
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<td>Conflicted or challenged belief systems</td>
<td>Verbalizes inner conflicts or questions about beliefs or faith Conflicts between religious beliefs and recommended treatments / Questions moral or ethical implications of therapeutic regimen / Express concern with life/death and/or belief system</td>
<td>“I am not sure if God is with me anymore”</td>
</tr>
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<td>Despair / Hopelessness</td>
<td>Hopelessness about future health, life Despair as absolute hopelessness, no hope for value in life</td>
<td>“Life is being cut short” “There is nothing left for me to live for”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grief / loss</td>
<td>Grief is the feeling and process associated with a loss of person, health, etc</td>
<td>“I miss my loved one so much” “I wish I could run again”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt / shame</td>
<td>Guilt is feeling that the person has done something wrong or evil; shame is a feeling that the person is bad or evil</td>
<td>“I do not deserve to die pain-free”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconciliation</td>
<td>Need for forgiveness and/or reconciliation of self or others</td>
<td>I need to be forgiven for what I did I would like my wife to forgive me</td>
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<td>Isolation</td>
<td>From religious community or other</td>
<td>“Since moving to the assisted living I am not able to go to my church anymore”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious specific</td>
<td>Ritual needs / Unable to practice in usual religious practices</td>
<td>“I just can’t pray anymore”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious / Spiritual Struggle</td>
<td>Loss of faith and/or meaning / Religious or spiritual beliefs and/or community not helping with coping</td>
<td>“What if all that I believe is not true”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations

• Screen & Access
• All HCPs should do spiritual screening
• Diagnostic labels/codes
• Treatment plans
• Support/encourage in expression of needs and beliefs
III. Formulation of a Spiritual Treatment Plan (cont’d)

- Spiritual care coordinator
- Documentation of spiritual support resources
- Follow up evaluations
- Treatment algorithms
- Discharge plans of care
- Bereavement care
- Establish procedure
Intervention – HCP / Pt. Communication

- Compassionate presence
- Reflective listening/query about important life events
- Support patient sources of spiritual strength
- Open ended questions
- Inquiry about spiritual beliefs, values and practices
- Life review, listening to the patient’s story
- Targeted spiritual intervention
- Continued presence and follow up
Intervention – Simple Spiritual Therapy

- Guided visualization for “meaningless pain”
- Progressive relaxation
- Breath practice or contemplation
- Meaning-oriented-therapy
- Referral to spiritual care provider as indicated
- Narrative Medicine
- Dignity-conserving therapy
Intervention – Patient Self-Care

- Massage
- Reconciliation with self and/or others
- Join spiritual support groups
- Meditation
- Religious or sacred spiritual readings or rituals
- Books
- Yoga, Tai Chi
- Exercise
- Engage in the arts (music, art, dance including therapy, classes etc)
- Journaling
Recommendations

- Policies are needed
- Policies developed by clinical sites
- Create healing environments
- Respect of HCPs reflected in policies
- Document assessment of patient needs
- Need for Board Certified Chaplains
- Workplace activity/programs to enhance spirit
Recommendations

- All members of the team should be trained in spiritual care
- Team members should have training in spiritual self-care
- Administrative support for professional development
- Spiritual care education/support
- Clinical site education
- Development of certification/training
- Competencies
- Interdisciplinary models
Recommendations

• Healthcare settings/organizations should support HCP’s attention to self-care/stress management
  > training/orientation
  > staff meetings/educational programs
  > environmental aesthetics

• Spiritual development
  > resources
  > continuing education
  > clinical context
VI. Personal and Professional Development (cont’d)

- Time encouraged for self-examination
- Opportunities for sense of connectedness and community
  - interprofessional teams
  - ritual and reflections
  - staff support
- Discussion of ethical issues
  - power imbalances
  - virtual based approach
  - opportunity to discuss
VII. Quality Improvement

Recommendations

• Domain of spiritual care to be included in QI plans
• Assessment tools
• QI frameworks based on NCP Guidelines
• QI specific to spiritual care
• Research needed
• Funding needed for research and clinical services
Conclusion

- Spiritual care is an essential to improving quality palliative care as determined by the National Consensus Project (NCP) and National Quality Forum (NQF)

- Studies have indicated the strong desire of patients with serious illness and end-of-life concerns to have spirituality included in their care
• Recommendations are provided for the implementation of spiritual care in palliative, hospice, hospital, long-term, and other clinical settings

• Interprofessional care that includes board-certified chaplains on the care team

• Regular ongoing assessment of patients’ spiritual issues

• Integration of patient spirituality into the treatment plan with appropriate follow-up with ongoing quality improvement

• Professional education and development of programs

• Adoption of these recommendations into clinical site policies
Conclusion (cont’d)

• Clinical sites can integrate spiritual care models into their programs
• Develop interprofessional training programs
• Engage community clergy and spiritual leaders in the care of patients and families
• Promote professional development that incorporates a biopsychosocial-spiritual practice model
• Develop accountability measures to ensure that spiritual care is fully integrated into the care of patients
SOERCE:
The Spirituality and Health Online Education and Resource Center

• Educational and clinical resources in spirituality, religion, and health

• Browse or search for articles, curricula, CE courses, tutorials, videos, practice guidelines, on-the-job tools, etc.

• Find resources to use

• Share resources you have created
Go to: www.gwish.org
Share your course materials, lectures, tutorials, etc.
SOERCE

- Recently launched → Please submit!

- Partnering with the MedEdPORTAL → formal peer review and wider dissemination of appropriate submissions

- Questions?

Email: soerce@gwish.org
What Can You Do In Your Community?
<table>
<thead>
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