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Palliative Care And Pain Treatment As Human Rights: Only A Minority Of The Suffering Receive Care

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Despite all the progress that has been made in providing palliative care over the past years, there can be no claim yet of adequate care for the dying and suffering, especially at the international level. Therefore, an important discussion point at the Congress will also be the "Declaration for the Recognition of Palliative Care and Pain Treatment as Human Rights." Primary supporters at the international level include the International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care (IAHPC) and the Worldwide Palliative Care Alliance (WPCA); at the European level the declaration is supported by - among others - the EAPC and the umbrella association of European pain societies EFIC.

The demand couldn't be timelier. As Professor Kress notes: "According to data from the World Health Organization and the International Narcotics Control Board, only a minority of the more than one million people who die each week receive palliative care to alleviate their suffering. Developing countries, which represent about 80 percent of the world's population, account for only about six percent of global consumption of morphine, a mainstream therapy for palliative care and pain control."

The declaration therefore calls for the recognition of palliative care and pain treatment as fundamental human rights, and challenges policy makers to adopt the necessary changes in legislation. A particularly important demand in the words of Professor Kress: "We advocate for improvements in access to and availability of opioids and other medication required for the effective treatment of pain and other symptoms common in palliative care, including special formulations and appropriate medications for children."

The exact text of the declaration - including the opportunity to support the cause - can be found here.

European Association for Palliative Care

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