

EAPC news and views



The Council of Europe recommendations on palliative care

The project for dissemination

The report of the Council of Europe (COE) expert committee on the organisation of palliative care was formally adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 12 November 2003. The report is the product of intensive collaborative work among participants from many countries. The final recommendations, supported by the accompanying memorandum, define a new standard in palliative care provision across member states.

An agreement has now been reached among member states to adopt the necessary policies and other measures, in order to provide a coherent and comprehensive national policy framework for palliative care. The report recognises that palliative care is a vital and integral part of health services and should be provided in a setting that is consistent with individual need and choice, without undue bureaucracy or delay. The report also highlights the need for structured programmes of education, training and research.

The decision to adopt the report demonstrates the commitment of member states to develop palliative care services to the highest possible standard. The success of the report will be judged on the extent to which we develop and implement programmes of palliative care that are capable of reaching out and addressing the needs of individual patients and families, throughout the 45 member states.

When adopting the report, member states agreed to promote international networking between palliative care agencies and to support an active,

Milestones

November 2003

Council of Europe recommendations signed by all 45 healthcare ministers

January 2004

EAPC-East action plan on dissemination created

February 2004

Invitation to palliative care organisations to take part

May 2004

21 countries registered to participate

August 2004

Translations ready

September 2004

Printing completed

11 October 2004

Press release

October 2004 onwards

Seminars and discussions take place

April 2005 onwards

Presentation of activities, reactions and results in Aachen at the EAPC congress

targeted dissemination of these recommendations. Consequently, the EAPC-East office, in collaboration with many national organisations, will co-ordinate an effort to promote the principles of the report in as many countries as possible. As Europeans, we can collectively make a difference by promoting the COE report in our own countries, and by working in partnership so that its vision can be realised.

- **What?** This Europe-wide project aims to bring the recommendations of the COE report to the attention of healthcare professionals, administrators, politicians, and the general public.
- **When?** The activities started around the second week of October 2004.
- **How?** The EAPC-East office, in collaboration with local co-ordinators

from palliative care organisations, will translate, print and distribute copies of the recommendations, which will be used as a tool for information and lobbying. In addition, a media campaign, seminars and discussions will take place to provide people with further information. This cannot be done, however, without the support of co-ordinators throughout many countries.

We are very proud to announce that the COE recommendations on palliative care have now been translated into booklets in Croatian, Dutch, English, French, Georgian, German, Greek, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Swedish, Turkish and Ukrainian.

For further information, please contact Carl Johan Fürst or Sylvia Sauter, at the EAPC-East Co-ordination Centre, Stockholms Sjukhem Foundation, 112 35 Stockholm, Sweden, or email: sylvia.sauter@stockholmssjukhem.se or cj.furst@stockholmssjukhem.se

New centre at Munich University Hospital

The new Interdisciplinary Center for Palliative Medicine at Munich University Hospital was inaugurated on 27 April 2004 (see photograph overleaf). The Center is run jointly by the Departments of Anaesthesiology, Neurology and Oncology. The building hosts a ten-bed dedicated inpatient unit, a hospital support team (in operation since 1999) and an education centre for undergraduate and postgraduate multiprofessional teaching in palliative care. In 2003, the University of Munich was the first university in Germany to introduce palliative care as a mandatory course

for all medical students. The research activities of the Munich Center are focused on:

- Psychosocial and spiritual aspects of individual quality of life
- Palliative care in neurological diseases
- Assessment of quality of care and service provision (including paediatrics and geriatrics)
- Advance directives and end-of-life decisions
- Evaluation of teaching courses.

The faculty comprises Professor Gian Domenico Borasio, Dr Claudia Bausewein, Dr Antje Beyer and Dr Bernadette Fittkau-Tönnemann.

ANOIS – The Hospice Garden Project

ANOIS (the Irish word for ‘now’ pronounced an-ish) is a project that has sprung from the creative energy and commitment of a small group of artists who offer their talents and skills, incorporating visual and performance arts, as well as environmental and ecological concepts.

With the knowledge of the certainty of death, there remains the task of preparing for what comes next. Nothing concentrates the mind like the edge of the abyss. And so, to aid, enhance and assist the patient, family and friends, there is now a magical place, which will lift the spirit, stimulate the senses and enliven the mind. It induces a childlike response in the most serious adult, addressing the change in perspective that death brings as part of its baggage. It reinforces the very truth that life is a cycle. Arriving on the planet, our only certainty is that it is a briefly rented space and that we are always on our way to the exit.

Death is rarely welcomed, often feared and is endlessly the winner in hard-fought battles. It is relentless and inevitable. There is a generally held view that the Irish know how to ‘do’ death in the same way that Italians ‘do’ design and the French ‘do’ love. In Ireland, nobody is invited to a funeral. They do



The new Interdisciplinary Center for Palliative Medicine in Munich

not have to be. It is expected that people will call to the house, go to the church, and turn up at the cemetery.

The vision of the project is to make a difference to quality of life during the final journey towards death, through designing, planning and planting unique hospice gardens that will offer the terminally ill person and their family and friends ways of embracing this important journey.

Complementing the already excellent medical and nursing standards in many palliative care facilities, such sensory or healing gardens would address the creative and spiritual needs of the terminally ill and provide a different type of nurturing to that which is normally expected in palliative healthcare.

Through using the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and wood, or by developing a theme from a fairytale, these gardens will foster acceptance, humour, memories, or encounters with grandchildren.

The project will assess the needs of residents in hospices and retirement homes, in five or more EU countries, to identify creative possibilities and unearth their attitudes and wishes.

All participating countries will jointly evaluate these findings. They will then develop and build the gardens as a creative response to the final journey towards death, in order to become examples of ‘best practice’ within the palliative care sector.

Through dialogue and consultation with the community involved, ANOIS seeks to create:

- Garden spaces that are stimulating, sensitive and sensual
 - A space for the use of the community (family, staff, visitors, patients) of a palliative care centre
 - A training ground for designers of the healing environment
 - A training opportunity as part of a study/research apprenticeship scheme in connection with horticultural and botanical colleges
 - A template for best practice in this area.
- The project will have four phases:
- Phase 1: Research, design and development
 - Phase 2: Implementation
 - Phase 3: Training
 - Phase 4: Dissemination and extension.

If you are interested in collaborating on this exciting and challenging project, either as a partner or as a sponsor, please email David Stalling (anois@ear.ie) briefly outlining your interests and experience, the organisation or community you represent, your level of commitment and your full contact details.

We also intend to make an application to ‘Culture 2000’, a programme funded by the EU to promote transnational co-operation and culture in Europe.

Project proposals must be designed and carried out by a collaborative partnership of cultural organisations from participating European countries, pooling their strengths for a common aim.