

AUSTRIA



Population: 8,184,691

Current Directory:

Printed version

Online version * www.hospiz.at/
www.palliativ.at/

None identified

Key Contact/National Association

Key contact:

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Palliative Care Services

NK = not known

| Number of Palliative Care Services | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|
| | Inpatient Palliative Care Units | Hospices | Consultant Teams in Hospitals | Home Care Teams | Day Centres | Total |
| Adult/Children | 18 | 7 | 10 | 17 | 2 | 54 |
| Paediatric only | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| | | | | Inpatient Palliative Care Units/hospices | Chronic Hospitals /Nursing Homes | Total |
| Number of beds allocated to adult palliative care inpatients | | | | 163 | 46 | 209 |
| | | | | Adults | Children | Total |
| Number of Bereavement Support Teams | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Comments/Sources

- The Albert Schweitzer Hospice in Graz (10 beds) is located in a hospital for chronically ill patients, the other hospices are located in nursing homes.
- There is a geriatric ward in a huge nursing home in Vienna, called "palliative care geriatric unit", but this is not a palliative or hospice unit in a narrower sense, so it is not included in the listed number of beds and facilities.
- There are no specialist bereavement support teams in Austria. However, bereavement services are often part of hospice and palliative care services or hospice associations. There are also some independent and private associations for bereavement, most of them for bereaved children and parents. The services they offer can be self-help groups, individual counselling and guided groups. There are also volunteers working

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>in this field.</p> <p>[Sources: HOSPICE AUSTRIA; 2005, Austrian Institute for Health Care (OEBIG), 2005]</p> <p>[EAPC Palliative Care Facts in Europe Questionnaire 2005]</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| Adult Palliative Care Population | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 90% | of patients receiving palliative care have a cancer diagnosis | |
| 10% | of patients receiving palliative care have other incurable conditions | |
| | Cancer | (n) |
| Number of patients who die at home | NK | 1267 |
| Number of patients who die in a general hospital | NK | 1671 |
| Number of patients who die in other healthcare institutions | NK | 805 |

| Comments/Sources |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentages of patients with cancer/non-cancer diagnoses receiving palliative care are estimated. The percentages of patients with certain diagnoses differ between different services. In general, the absolute and relative number of non-cancer patients is growing in Austrian palliative care services. Approximately 25% of the patients cared for by home support teams die in palliative care units and 10% in hospices. 25% of the patients of hospital support teams die in a palliative care unit. The number of deaths in 'hospital' is rather high, as many of the beds in palliative care units are located in general hospitals. <p>[EAPC Palliative Care Facts in Europe Questionnaire 2005]</p> |

| Palliative Care Workforce Capacity | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| | Full-time | Part-time | Total |
| Physicians | 35 | 50 | 85 |
| Nurses | 225 | 240 | 465 |
| Social Workers | NK | NK | 65 |
| Psychologists | NK | NK | 25 |
| Physiotherapists | NK | NK | 25 |
| Occupational Therapists | NK | NK | 7 |
| Spiritual/Faith leaders | NK | NK | 30 |
| Volunteers | NK | NK | 1750 |

| Comments/Sources |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All of the figures for the palliative care workforce capacity in Austria are estimated. The calculation is based on the number of existing services and known criteria for staffing facilities. Many services are under development and there are no data about the exact number of persons working in this field. <p>[EAPC Palliative Care Facts in Europe Questionnaire 2005]</p> |

| Funding of palliative care services | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Total number of palliative care services funded by the government | 28 |
| Total number of palliative care services supported by a combination of private and public funds | 26 |
| Total number of palliative care services funded privately or by NGO's | 1 |

| Comments/Sources |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These estimated numbers are based on an assessment of the existing services. Palliative care units are publicly funded in Austria, but the funding does not cover all the costs. So the number of services funded by the government only includes palliative care units in public hospitals. The other services listed are funded through public projects. There are large differences between the percentage of public and private monies |

within the varying services.

- There is only one small service in Austria which is privately funded.

[EAPC Palliative Care Facts in Europe Questionnaire 2005]

Perceived use of main opioids in palliative care

| Order of frequency | Opioid | Estimated cost per month (€) |
|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| First opioid | Fentanyl | €87,00 |
| Second opioid | Hydromorphon | €57,00 |
| Third opioid | Morphinhydrochloride | €20,00 |

Comments/Sources

[EAPC Palliative Care Facts in Europe Questionnaire 2005]

Key issues and challenges

- There are several different bodies (federal, regional, communities, social health insurance and retirement pension insurance) that are responsible for the implementation of the required services.
- Acceptance of specialized hospice and palliative care into the traditional health care system still has to be developed.
- The prescription of strong opioids requires special obligations for safekeeping, provision and filling out.
- Many (or most) of those who prescribe strong opioids have mental prejudices.
- Undergraduate and also postgraduate education about strong opioids still needs improvement.

[EAPC Palliative Care Euro-Barometer 2005]

Palliative care accreditation

- There is no specialist accreditation for palliative care professionals in Austria at the present time. However, there are different certified courses for palliative care for physicians, nurses and other health care professionals.

[EAPC Palliative Care Facts in Europe Questionnaire 2005]

Palliative care milestones

- 1997: A minimum of 60 hours of “Palliative Care” is integrated into the curriculum of the undergraduate education for registered nurses.
- 1999: Palliative care units become part of the national plan for acute hospitals in Austria.
- 2001: All political parties in Austria vote against euthanasia and for the further development of hospice and palliative care.
- 2003: Hospice Austria, the umbrella organisation of the Austrian hospice and palliative care services, develops a clear perspective for the further development of hospice and palliative care.
- 2003: The first palliative care facilities are implemented in a medical university in Austria (Graz).
- 2003: “Declaration of the Austrian Government 2003 to 2006” aims for fair access to hospice and palliative care services for all those who need it.
- 2004: The Austrian Palliative Care Association marks the publication of the Council of Europe (2003) report on palliative care (Recommendation 24 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the organisation of palliative

care) with widespread discussion about the report among experts in hospice and palliative care. The Minister of Health and the State Secretary are informed about the report, and Dr. Harald Retschitzegger, an Austrian physician, is a member of the working group.

- 2004: The document “Grundlagen zur Weiterentwicklung der Hospiz- und Palliativversorgung in Österreich, Austrian Institute of Health” (ÖBIG, Vienna) is published.
- 2005: The document “Artikel 15 a Vereinbarung über die Organisation und Entwicklung des Gesundheitswesens” (p 8, Article 3 (2), Vienna) is published.
- 2005: The Ministry of Health implements a working group to prepare recommendations for the stepwise integration of hospice and palliative care into the health care system in Austria.

[EAPC Palliative Care Euro-Barometer 2005]

Health policy

- The adoption of hospice and palliative care units into the national plan for acute hospitals has enabled public funding for palliative care units in acute care hospitals. This funding is combined with criteria for staffing and equipment.
- The agreement about the organization and funding of the health care system in Austria, negotiated every four years between the federal and provincial governments, includes for the first time the topic ‘hospice and palliative care’.
- A working group is planning steps for a systematic integration of hospice and palliative care services on all levels of care into the health care system.
- The Austrian Palliative Care Association has participated in the Council of Europe discussions about euthanasia (the Marty Report). Hospice Austria started a lobbying initiative among the politicians who represent Austria in the Council of Europe to vote against the Marty Report.
- At the current time, there are no initiatives in Austria that seek the legislation of euthanasia or assisted suicide. In 2001 all political parties in Austria voted against euthanasia and for hospice and palliative care.

[EAPC Palliative Care Euro-Barometer 2005]

References

Gronemeyer, R., Fink, M., Globisch, M., and Schumann, F. (2005) *Helfen am ende des lebens hospizarbeit und palliative care in Europa*. Giessen: Hospiz und Hospizbewegung, pp. 77-99, Österreich.

Jaspers, B., and Schindler, T. 2004. *Stand der palliativmedizin und hospizarbeit in Deutschland und im vergleich zu ausgewählten staaten*. Enquete-Kommission des Bundestages. Ethik und Recht der modernen Medizin. Section 8.7, Österreich.

Information correct as at: 7th August 2006.





EAPC Task Force on the development of Palliative Care in Europe

