



EAPC Task Force on the development of Palliative Care in Europe

FINLAND



Population: 5,223,442

Current Directory:

Printed version

Online version

None identified x

Key Contact/National Association

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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	2	4	10	10	4	30
Paediatric only	0	0	0	0	0	0
				Inpatient Palliative Care Units/ hospices	Chronic Hospitals /Nursing Homes	Total
Number of beds allocated to adult palliative care inpatients				75	0	75
				Adults	Children	Total
Number of Bereavement Support Teams				0	0	0

Comments/Sources

- Number of hospital care teams and home care teams are estimates only.
- Although no paediatric units are specifically allocated for palliative care use, it is included in paediatric care units in different hospitals.
- There are no specialist bereavement support teams. However, bereavement support is provided in hospices, special palliative care units (such as the one at Tampere) and in some primary health care units.



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[EAPC Palliative Care Facts in Europe Questionnaire 2005]

Adult Palliative Care Population

99%	of patients receiving palliative care have a cancer diagnosis		
1%	of patients receiving palliative care have other incurable conditions		
		Cancer	(%)
Number of patients who die at home		NK	10
Number of patients who die in a general hospital		NK	50
Number of patients who die in other healthcare institutions		NK	40

Comments/Sources

- Percentage of patients with cancer/non-cancer diagnoses receiving palliative care are an estimate only.
- Place of death data are an estimate only.

[EAPC Palliative Care Facts in Europe Questionnaire 2005]

Palliative Care Workforce Capacity

	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Physicians	10	50	60
Nurses	150	300	450
Social Workers	NK	NK	NK
Psychologists	NK	NK	NK
Physiotherapists	NK	NK	NK
Occupational Therapists	NK	NK	NK
Spiritual/Faith leaders	NK	NK	NK
Volunteers	NK	NK	250

Comments/Sources

- All palliative care workforce capacity figures are estimates only.
- There are two specialist palliative care units in Finland (Tampere and Helsinki) employing four full-time physicians, and four hospices that employ either full or part time physicians. Some of the primary care centres also employ physicians who work part-time in palliative care.
- The number of nurses working in palliative care is very difficult to estimate. In addition to nurses working in hospices and palliative care units, there are also nurses providing palliative care in home care teams and health care units.
- All hospices and palliative care units have health workers in their teams who work predominantly with other patients, but can provide their services to palliative care patients when needed.

[EAPC Palliative Care Facts in Europe Questionnaire 2005]

Funding of palliative care services

Total number of palliative care services funded by the government	0
Total number of palliative care services funded privately or by NGO's	30

Comments/Sources

- No palliative care services are funded directly by the government. All hospices are society-based and all hospitals are funded by the communities.

[EAPC Palliative Care Facts in Europe Questionnaire 2005]

Perceived use of main opioids in palliative care

Order of frequency	Opioid	Estimated cost per month (€)
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First opioid	Morphine	14.50 € (30mgx2)
Second opioid	Oxycodone	70.40 € (20mg x2)
Third opioid	Fentanyl plaster	49 € (25 µg/72h)
Comments/Sources		
[EAPC Palliative Care Facts in Europe Questionnaire 2005]		

Key issues and challenges

- Lack of organisation.
- Palliative care is not recognised as a sub-speciality.
- Lack of education about how to use opioids.
- Special forms are required for opioid prescription.
- Lack of time for physicians to concentrate on symptom management.

[EAPC Palliative Care Euro-Barometer 2005]

Palliative care accreditation

- “There is no specialist accreditation for palliative care professionals in Finland at the present time.”

[EAPC Palliative Care Facts in Europe Questionnaire 2005]

Palliative care milestones

- *1995-2000*: The number of pain units in hospitals steadily increases.
- *2000-2005*: The development of professorship positions improves education relating to palliative care.
- *2000-2005*: Palliative care units become established in University Hospitals. Palliative care is taken more seriously among doctors through University Hospital activity and education that makes it a part of medical science, not simply nursing.
- *2000-2005*: A Nordic specialist course in palliative medicine is developed.
- *2004*: The Helsinki University Central Hospital mark 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) by promoting the report at a number of educational events in an attempt to get palliative medicine established as a sub-speciality in Finland.

[EAPC Palliative Care Euro-Barometer 2005]

Health policy

- Palliative care is not officially organised in Finland. In primary care, GPs are responsible for palliative care. In some regions specialised palliative care is available, but in some it is not.
- The Helsinki University Central Hospital participated in the Council of Europe discussions about euthanasia (the Marty Report) through the publication of a number of newspaper articles about euthanasia that were written by the chairperson.
- At the current time, there are no initiatives in Finland that seek the legalisation of euthanasia or assisted suicide.
- There is a good chance that in the future palliative care will become a sub-speciality in Finland. This will provide official educational positions in Universities.



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- Palliative medicine needs to be recognised as a sub-speciality. At the moment, any person can call themselves a 'palliative care specialist', and any unit can call itself a 'palliative care' unit, as there are neither official recommendations nor requirements for specialised knowledge and organisation.

[EAPC Palliative Care Euro-Barometer 2005]

References

Kaasalainen, V., Vainio, A., and Ali-Melkkilä, T. 1997. Developments in the treatment of cancer pain in Finland: the third nation-wide survey. *Pain*. Vol. 70(2-3): 175-83.

Lammi, U.K., Kosunen, E., and Kellokumpu-Lehtinen, P. 2001. Palliative cancer care in two health centres and one hospice in Finland. *Support. Care Cancer*, vol. 9(1): 25-31.

Vainio A. Palliative care in Finland. *Palliat Med*. 1990;4:225-227.

Information correct as at: 7th August 2006.

