

SERVIZIO SANITARIO REGIONALE
EMILIA-ROMAGNA
Azienda Unità Sanitaria Locale di Reggio Emilia
IRCCS Istituto in tecnologie avanzate e modelli assistenziali in oncologia

Information for patients and relatives

Palliative

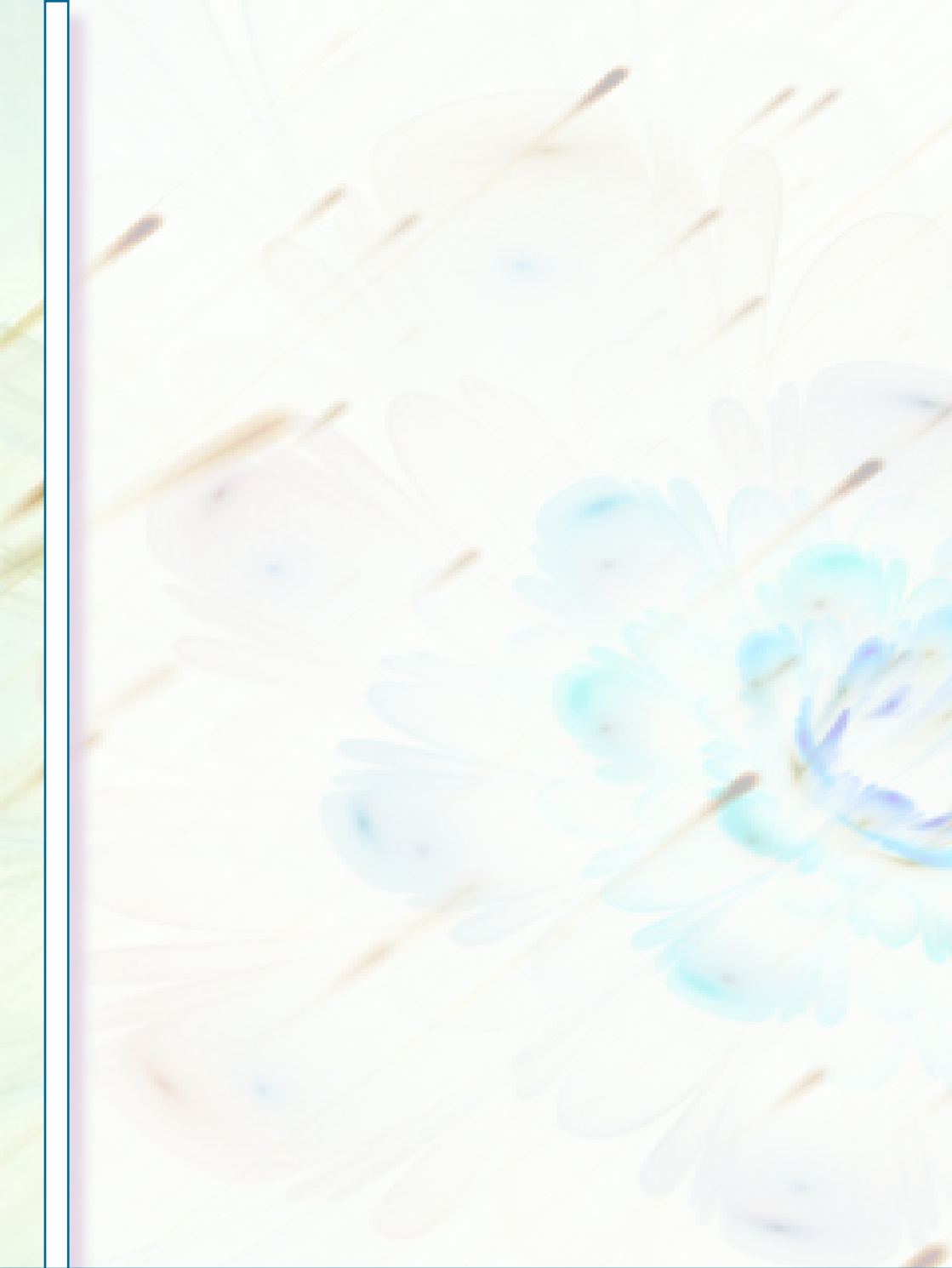
Care

at

Reggio Emilia

Arcispedale Santa Maria Nuova

Research Hospital



Trattiamo insieme il suo dolore

Dear Patient,

this leaflet was written to give You useful information on palliative care at Reggio Emilia Arcispedale Santa Maria Nuova Research Hospital

The following information doesn't replace the dialogue with healthcare staff, so please use it as suggestion to raise questions and requests.

"You matter because you are you, and you matter to the end of your life"

Cicely Saunders

What is Palliative Care?

Palliative care is a medical approach aimed to improve the **quality of life** for people who are seriously ill. In other words, palliative care deals with suffering, human dignity, health care needs and quality of life. Palliative care also deals with assisting and supporting patients' relatives.

Palliative care relieves pain and physical disorders in patients affected by a life-threatening illness. It takes also care of psychological problems in patients and their relatives, and more generally of all problems that a person with a cureless illness might have.

"Palliative" comes from the Latin word *pallium* (literally "cloak"). Palliare means "to cloak". In ancient Greece and Rome, *pallium* was the woolen cloak worn on a shoulder and wrapped around the body.

Approach by Palliative care keeps patients and their relatives from existing or future problems.



Who benefits from Palliative care?

Palliative care is provided not only to cancer patients but to patients affected by an irremediable disease, which nevertheless can be treated.

To take good care of a patient doesn't lead to ignore his family. Palliative care is dedicated to patient's requirements and those of his family, as they are part of the same group.

Family plays an irreplaceable role, as it is source of love and it takes an active part to treatment. For this reason, family can share and steer therapeutic choices suggested by the treatment team. If it receives proper support, family will cope with its care duty, thus obtaining fulfillment and meaning.

Palliative care can be started at an early stage of the course of the disease, in connection with other treatments designed to prolong life (*for instance, chemotherapy and radiation therapy*).

Who provides Palliative care?

Palliative care represents a teamwork, where different healthcare professionals perform work related tasks

Components of team might be:

- palliative care specialists
- specialist physicians
- general practitioners
- social workers
- psychologists
- physical therapists
- chaplains
- dietitians

The fundamental element of palliative care is the realistic way patients, their families and healthcare professionals communicate with each other about treatment goals.

Palliative Care team does not only deal with pain treatment, but with all physical and non-physical issues related to a patient with an irrecoverable disease. Palliative care team evaluates not only the importance of physical problems, but also and above all both the patient's suffering and that of his relatives. For this reason, communication between staff and patients-relatives is of paramount importance. An effective communication enables palliative care professionals to suggest always the most appropriate pathway to patients and their families, according to the step of the care pathway.

Where is palliative care provided?

Palliative Care is associated to the respective treatments (*in cancer patients, for instance, chemotherapy and radiation therapy*). Palliative care is provided where the patient is:

- at outpatient clinic;
- at home;
- at hospital;
- in a hospice setting.

Reggio Emilia Arcispedale Santa Maria Nuova

Since April 2013, Reggio Emilia Arcispedale Santa Maria Nuova has been providing a Palliative Care Unit.

Physicians and nurses at Palliative care Unit:

- have a specialty training in palliative care;
- provide consultancy for patients hospitalized in Hospital Units;
- give outpatient advice for patients sent by different Hospital Units.

**Ask a hospital employee how to get
an appointment with a physician or a nurse
of the Palliative care Unit**

Edited by:

Massimo Costantini, *Palliative care specialist, Director of Palliative care Unit*

Silvia Tanzi, *Palliative care specialist, Palliative care Unit*

Reviewed by:

Simone Cocchi, *Medical Library*

Elena Cervi, *Medical Library*

Translation from Italian into English:

Daniela Masi, *Medical Directorate*

Graphic design:

Communication, Public Relations and Information Unit

Reggio Emilia, Arcispedale Santa Maria Nuova – Research Hospital



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