



## The 11th Palliative Care Congress Glasgow 2016

### Session Abstract

# Integrated palliative care: an international perspective Can palliative care now go viral?

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The WHO in 2014 called for integration of palliative care in the treatment of all advanced conditions in all settings in all its member states. Greater integration of UK specialist medical training is also about to occur, and integration of health and social care is also happening. Palliative care was initially defined as an approach to care for all clinicians, but in the last 20 years it has focussed more on specialist care and is currently inaccessible to most people dying even in richer countries.

Palliative care stands at a crossroads. Specialist palliative care services may continue to provide a top-quality service to a chosen few – in America Palliative Medicine has recently received specialty status. Or can palliative care return to its roots and vision to seek to serve all who would benefit from this approach internationally? This talk will highlight and illustrate five different ways that palliative care can be integrated within health and social care internationally.

Firstly, it can be integrated in the care of people with all progressive life-threatening diseases, in the care of all patients who are at risk of deterioration and dying, and support patients according to need rather than diagnoses. Secondly, it can be integrated early in the course of the illness trajectory, even from diagnosis, not just in the final weeks. Thirdly, it can address all dimensions of need according to which is most significant and distressing to the patient. Fourthly, the approach can be practised within all settings - hospitals, and especially in care homes and peoples' homes in the community. Fifthly, palliative care can be integrated in all national health systems and disease guidelines, especially in resource poor countries where community involvement is crucial.

We have the opportunity to make palliative care endemic in health care. Then “palliative” might cease to be a dreaded word to our patients, and palliative care become viral.