ACCESS TO PALLIATIVE CARE FOR CHILDREN INUKRAINE – CHALLENGES AND VIEWS

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**Background**. Ukraine, a country with a population of 45 million, does not have a national Pediatric Palliative Care (PPC) policy.

**Aims.** (1) To review Ukrainian resources regarding PPC. (2) To analyze initial experiences of a mobile palliative care team for families and young children in Kharkiv region (1.4 million people) in 2015.

**Methods**. (1) Review of existing print and online resources. (2) After the creation of the first mobile PPC team, we reviewed the visits of 31 families at home to define their clinical and psycho-social-spiritual needs.

**Results. In 2016** no PPC regulations, guidelines, or manuals in Ukrainian language exist and no education curriculum for medical students, nurses, physicians, or other clinicians were implemented. No palliative care specialists were listed in the catalog of medical professions.

All 31 children displayed pathologies of CNS: congenital malformation (29%); cerebral palsy (35.4%); genetic disorders (12.9%). Parental and children’s needs fell into three categories: (A) Medical issues: orthopedic (93.5%), vaccination (93.5%), feeding (80.6%), posture (61.3%), hypersalivation (32.2%), anticonvulsant therapy (16%); (B) Psychological issues: problems with siblings (100%); communication / socialization of children (90.3%); sensory activity (83.8%), parental relationships (74.2%). (C) Social issues: need for volunteers’ support / social worker (58.1%), poverty (58.1%), connection with local rehabilitation centers (54.8%), need for medical equipment (41.9%).

**Conclusions:** In spite of high medical, social and psychological needs for children with life-limiting conditions there is currently no PPC infrastructure, no access to PPC for children with life-limiting conditions in Ukraine beyond a model project. Mobile team home visit approach could be the better way to begin building of PPC service in condition of low income and resources of the country.