IMPACT OF THEORETICAL PALLIATIVE CARE TRAINING FOR ONCOLOGY RESIDENTS IN ROMANIA

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BACKGROUND: Although palliative care (PC) services are developed in Romania since 1992 at present around 10% cancer patients receive specialized palliative care. Training oncologist to deliver basic palliative care is a must.

AIM: To develop a theoretical and practical training program for oncology residents based on ESMO/ASCO recommendation. Assess the baseline knowledge of oncology residents regarding palliative care prior to the educational intervention

METHOD: Based on ESMO/ASCO recommendations, PC curriculum for medical oncology was developed and piloted in 5 counties in Romania. Out of 270 oncology residents from Romania, 144 participated in PC theoretical courses (42 hours). Participants received a pre-test before and a post-test after the theoretical training for testing knowledge related to PC. 31 residents finished also the clinical placement and completed a post-test 2 related to knowledge. Means for each topic from pre and post-test were compared. We used Paired Sample T Test.

RESULTS: Main PC domains covered in the multiple-choice examination included pain, non-pain symptom assessment and management, communication, psychosocial and spiritual care, knowledge of/referral to hospice, end-of-life care. From 144 participants to theoretical training, 86 had both pre and post-test completed. Comparing pre and post test scores there was a **70% increase of knowledge related to PC**. There were 36 topics -from which 6 topics didn't have paired question in the pre-test, and post-test. Applying Paired Sample T Test, 30 pairs were compared. For 3 pairs (on breaking bad news, fatigue and neuropsychiatric symptoms) the weren't significant acquisitions; for the rest of 27 pairs significant increase in knowledge and reported skills were detected at $p \leq 0.001$ level.

270 residents are trained in Romania for the medical oncology specialty, in 9 university centers around the country.

144 oncology residents from 5 university centers in the country enrolled in the **Palliative Care Theoretical Training PRE-TEST**

86 oncology residents graduated the **42 h Palliative Care Theoretical Training POST-TEST 1**

31 oncology residents graduated the **16 weeks Palliative Care Clinical Placement POST-TEST 2**

70% increase of residents' knowledge related to palliative care topics

CONCLUSIONS: Including a PC module in oncology residents training program will increase their knowledge regarding PC and hopefully will improve quality of care to oncology patients.