Overview and Objectives:

- The broad objectives of this course are to provide trainees with an overview of the basic and clinical sciences underlying the professional care of dying patients, and to introduce them to the primary reference sources in the field of palliative medicine.

- The course will be taught in a small-group, discussion format, with faculty drawn from content-experts throughout the medical center. Discussions will combine analysis of the evidence base for a wide range of palliative care interventions with clinical case discussions. Cases will be drawn from the literature, faculty experience, and current clinical activities of the trainees themselves.

Responsibilities:

- Readings assigned to each session

Course Requirements:

- See individual session requirements

Attendance Policy:

- Students are expected to sign-in to each class (computer provided in suite lobby). If a problem is encountered with the sign-in system, please contact the course instructor(s) as well as Lauren Talotta (talottals@upmc.edu) immediately.

Evaluation:

- There will be a take home examination at the end of the course that will present a complex case for analysis based on the concepts covered in the course.

Required Textbook(s):

- These books are available at the Health Center Book Store.

The complete course syllabus will be available online on Blackboard [https://courseweb.pitt.edu/webapps/login/](https://courseweb.pitt.edu/webapps/login/)

Academic Integrity:

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity [http://www.provost.pitt.edu/info/aii.html](http://www.provost.pitt.edu/info/aii.html). Any student suspected of violating this obligation
for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

**Course Schedule**

**Session: 17 Special Populations: Cardiac and Pulmonary Disease**

**At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:**

1. Know the disease trajectory in patients with advanced cardiopulmonary disease.
2. Describe prognostication in patients with advanced cardiopulmonary disease.
3. Manage physical symptoms specific to this patient population.
4. Describe role of hospice in caring for these patients.

**Required Reading(s):**


**Session: 18 Artificial Nutrition and Hydration**

**At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:**

1. Review ethical, legal, and religious issues associated with artificial hydration and nutrition (AHN)
2. Describe the benefits and burdens of AHN at the end of life in
   - patients who have cachexia due to advanced cancer
   - patients with dementia and risk of aspiration
3. Identify three types of patients for whom you would recommend AHN.
4. Be able to have a conversation with a family member who is asking AHN.

**Required Reading(s):**


**Session: 19 Palliative Uses of Radiation Therapy**
At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:

1. To understand different radiotherapy techniques, how they are applied, and possible side effects.

2. To understand indications for radiation therapy in the setting of palliative care.

Required Reading(s):


Recommended Reading(s):


Session: 20 Conducting a Family Conference

At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:

1. Describe three philosophical reasons for talking to surrogates about end of life care decisions.
2. Describe five purposes of a family conference.
3. Describe a five stage approach to facilitating a family meeting.
4. Describe how one might talk to a surrogate about forgoing life sustaining treatment.

Required Reading(s):

1. Chaitin B, Arnold RM. Holding family conferences in the ICU. Up-to-date (Parts 1-2)

Recommended Reading(s):

1. Arnold Handout (family meeting comm guide copy.doc)
2. EOL communication guidelines in Australia.pdf

Session: 21 Special Populations: Neurologic Conditions

At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate basic knowledge of the physiologic and pathologic processes of ALS and related neurodegenerative diseases.
2. Describe the medical and psychological aspects of prognostication in ALS.
3. Apply the fundamentals of palliative care to patients with ALS.
4. Learn the clinical manifestations of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.
5. Understand the basic causes of motor neuron degeneration in ALS.
6. Appreciate the importance of nutrition, ventilation, and pain management in this population.
7. Appreciate the need for palliative care in the ALS population.
**Required Reading(s):**


**Session: 22 Bereavement**

**At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:**

1. Outline a general approach to evaluation of grief and bereavement in the dying patient and his or her family.

2. Summarize theories of the tasks of grief and bereavement.

3. Demonstrate a willingness and ability to refer grieving persons to other caregivers when appropriate.

4. Demonstrate understanding of differences in cultural approaches to death and dying.

5. Summarize the concepts of stages of grief.

6. List several factors which commonly complicate grief.

7. List adverse outcomes of prolonged or complicated grief.

8. Recognize the common symptoms and manifestations of grief.

9. Cite at least five symptoms of unresolved grief.

**Required Reading(s):**

   a. Kissane, DW. *Bereavement.*

**Session: 23 Special Populations: Pediatrics**

**At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:**

1. Describe common life-limiting illnesses in the pediatric population and their usual disease course.

2. Discuss developmental influences on children’s understanding of death.

3. Outline the role of palliative care for a child with a potentially life-limiting condition.


5. Discuss emotional, legal, and ethical factors influencing the decision making process in pediatric palliative care.
**Required Reading(s):**

   a. 9.1. McGrath, P, Brown, S. Pain control.
   b. 9.3. Stevens, M. Psychological adaptation of the dying child.
   c. 9.5. Davies, B, Sumner, L. Special consideration for children in palliative medicine.

**Session: 24 Communication: Discussing Goals of Care**

**At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:**

1. Describe a method for discussing treatment options.
2. Describe a values-based approach to discussing palliative care.
3. Be able to ask five key questions that help elicit patient values.
4. Understand how managing transitions is often linked to giving bad news.
5. Discuss how this conversation may differ in non-Oncological palliative care.

**Required Reading(s):**


**Recommended Reading(s):**


**Session: 25 The Role of Function in Palliative Care**

**At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:**

1. Define frailty
2. Name oneself report and two performance based measures of function
3. Define the role of palliative care can help maintain function

**Required Reading(s):**


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**Session: 26 Comprehensive Palliative Care Assessment and Interdisciplinary Team Work**

**At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:**

1. Know the domains required to complete a whole person assessment.

2. Identify role of each member of interdisciplinary team.

3. Describe strategies to manage interdisciplinary team conflict.

**Required Reading(s):**


   d. 2.1. Cherny, N. The problem of suffering.

   e. 2.5. Lickiss, JN, et al. The interdisciplinary team.

   f. 6.1. Ingham, J, Portenoy, R. The measurement of pain and other symptoms.

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**Session: 27 Managing the Actively Dying Patient**

**At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:**

1. Know physiologic signs that death is imminent.

2. Manage common physical symptoms in the final hours of life.

3. Know how to prepare and support patient, family, and caregivers.

4. Know how to pronounce death.

**Required Reading(s):**


   a. 18. Fürst, CJ, Doyle D. The terminal phase.

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**Session: 28 Cultural Issues in End of Life Care**

**At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:**
1. Appreciate the effects of culture, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and gender on the experience of illness and health care.

2. Identify areas of potential conflict and confusion in the delivery of end-of-life care across cultures.

3. Describe methods of inquiry to elicit expectations and preferences that reflect cultural factors.

**Required Reading(s):**


**Session: 29 Withdrawal of Life Support**

**At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:**

1. Describe the ethical principles for withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining therapy as it relates to:
   a. Dialysis
   b. Mechanical ventilation
   c. Artificial hydration and nutrition
   d. Pacemakers, ICD and left-ventricular assist device (LVAD)

2. Describe a medication regimen to ensure comfort during/after withdrawal of mechanical ventilation

3. Describe a medication regimen to ensure comfort during/after discontinuation of LVAD

4. Describe a medication regimen to ensure comfort for patient with intracranial process (mass, bleed or lepto-meningeal disease)

5. Describe at least two ways to explain to families what the patient may feel after stopping AHN

6. Describe how transition to comfort may be affected by patient’s organ transplant donor status

**Required Reading(s):**

1. Crippen D. Medical treatment for the terminally ill: the 'risk of unacceptable badness.' Critical Care, 2005, 9: 3715-3716


**Recommended Reading(s):**


Session: 30 Professional Self-care and Reflection in End of Life Care

At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:

1. Describe sources of psychological and existential stress in the care of dying patients
2. Identify personal and professional resources for dealing with psychological and existential stress

Required Reading(s):

2. Billings, On Being a Reluctant Physician—Strains and Rewards in Caring for the Dying at Home
3. Fast Facts
   #167
   #168
   #169
   #170

Session: 31 Religious Traditions and Spiritual Care

At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:

1. Appreciate spiritual and existential concerns of patients and families near the end of life.
2. Distinguish “spirituality” from “religion.”

Required Reading(s):

1. Kestenbaum, Yisael Whence My Help Come. Caregiving In The Jewish Tradition, Mazo Publishers Jerusalem, Israel
3. Speck, Peter 11 Spiritual Issues in Palliative Care, pgs. 805-813

Session: 32 Structures, settings and financing for Palliative Care

At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:

1. Describe the indeterminate nature of the delivery of palliative care services within the U.S. health care system.
2. Recognize the policy challenges in palliative care that include the development of services and financing structures that accompany the clinical complexities of the final stages of life.
3. Identify the highlights and the ambiguities from the literature on the economics of hospice and palliative care.

4. Describe the current financing for palliative care in the inpatient, outpatient, and long-term care settings.

Required Reading(s):


