



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Complexity Medicine and Palliative Care

2324-4-H4101D381

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#### Aims

Providing students with the skills to address the issues of biopsychosocial complexity and palliative care in clinical practice.

#### Contents

Advanced economies are undergoing profound changes that affect both demographic and epidemiological aspects, as well as social and economic dimensions. One of the most significant effects is the progressive aging of the population. Unfortunately, this increase in life expectancy does not always come with satisfactory quality of life. Elderly individuals, often living alone, coexist for years with chronic illnesses, disabilities, cognitive deficits, and personal suffering. Complexity medicine deals with individuals who are simultaneously affected by some or all of these conditions. In many cases, palliative care represents the most appropriate approach to relieve suffering and control symptoms in these individuals. Palliative care, historically developed in the treatment of cancer patients, must now be part of the toolkit of 21st-century physicians who will care for elderly patients with high clinical complexity. Palliative care has proven to be invaluable in such individuals, ensuring early intervention and continuity of care, complementing "active" therapies. This course aims to provide students with multidisciplinary skills, teaching them how to identify frail and complex patients, recognize and manage palliative care needs, and provide information on epidemiological data related to the aging population and prognosis tools that are independent of specific pathologies. The course aims to impact the cultural and educational dimension of future healthcare professionals, including providing students with knowledge on teamwork, communication, and engaging with family members

#### Detailed program

Epidemiological data on the aging of the Italian and global populations.  
Demographic, epidemiological, and social transitions in the 21st century.  
Definition of multimorbidity, comorbidity, and complexity.  
Geriatric syndromes and unmet needs.

Introduction to Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment methods.  
Polypharmacy, therapeutic and diagnostic reconciliation.  
Introduction to the principles of palliative medicine and care.  
Identification and Multidimensional Assessment of palliative care needs in adults and children.  
Planning and sharing care pathways.  
Early intervention and Continuity of Care through clinical governance of care pathways.  
Multidisciplinary approach centered on the patient and family, and based on collaboration among professionals: teamwork and the role of volunteering.  
Therapeutic relationships and alliance.  
Interpersonal communication techniques and delivering bad news.  
End-of-life ethics.  
Spirituality.

## **Prerequisites**

3rd-4th year of the Medicine and Surgery degree course.  
2nd year of the Nursing degree course.

## **Teaching form**

Lessons will be delivered in "in-person" mode, unless there will be subsequent ministerial provisions related to pandemic emergencies.

## **Textbook and teaching resource**

Manuale di geriatria di Antonelli - Incalzi, Cesari, Leosco, Pedone, Ungar, Volpato - Societa' Italiana di Gerontologia e Geriatria • 2019 Edra - Masson

Il mondo delle cure palliative. Manuale per giovani medici. A. Turriziani, G. Zaninetta, Esculapio 2020

Fondamenti di Medicina Palliativa, C. Chelazzi, R. De Gaudio, I. Iannini, G. VILLA, IDELSON-GNOCCHI 2023

## **Semester**

1st semester

## **Assessment method**

Questions to participants about clinical cases (description of real-life cases in whom the interconnections between different elements/variables are analyzed in light of one or more theoretical paradigms)

## **Office hours**

By appointment with email to the professors.

## **Sustainable Development Goals**

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

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