



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Internal Medicine 2 A

2425-6-H4101D335-H4101D203M

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#### Aims

The course aims to provide students with basic knowledge of the objectives and purposes of palliative medicine for oncological patients and patients with complex and advanced chronic conditions. It aims to identify and illustrate the multidimensionality and complexity of health needs according to the three typical disease trajectories: cancer, organ failure, and frailty-dementia. The course also aims to promote the care and management of patients and their families through multiprofessional teams within the Local Palliative Care Network. Additionally, it aims to explore the psychological, social, spiritual dimensions, as well as the ethical and legal implications of palliative care.

#### Contents

- a. Definition and fundamental principles of palliative care: quality of life, early palliative care, and end-of-life care.
- b. Different professional roles involved in palliative care.
- c. Complex and multidimensional needs of oncological patients, patients with organ failure, patients in frail conditions, and paediatric patients.
- d. Relational and communicative needs of patients and families, including psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions.
- e. Managing pain, symptoms, and common conditions in incurable patients.
- f. Recognizing the bioethical implications related to palliative care.

#### Detailed program

1. Introduction to Palliative Care (ED)
  - 1.1. History and Definition of Medicine and Palliative Care - Diagnosing Complexity in palliative care, early

palliative care and simultaneous palliative care: being able to identify the clinical conditions and the nature of the needs that characterize the conditions of Long Term Care (early palliative care), first transition (simultaneous palliative care) and end-of-life care (specialized palliative care).

1.2. Demographic, epidemiological, and social transitions: the present and development prospects: to know the characteristics of the three transitions and their effects on the organization of services.

## 2. Management and clinical governance of care pathways (ED)

2.1. Identification and Multidimensional Assessment of the Needs for Palliative Care, Prognostic Assessment Tools: to know the fundamentals of third-generation multidimensional assessment tools and their application, also in the development of synthetic indicators of frailty and prognosis.

2.2. Management aspects, team and shared responsibility, skills, models: to know how to organize and develop the integrated work of the team consistent with the principles of global patient and family care.

## 3. Psycho-social aspects (DE)

3.1. Communication, Care Relationship and "Caring" - Communication as a Therapeutic Tool: Knowing how to manage communication in the critical steps of disease progression and loss of autonomy.

3.2. How to communicate the bad news: to know how to conduct an end-of-life conversation, even in the presence of an angry, hostile, oppositional, depressed, and indifferent patient.

3.3. Suffering, Mourning and Complicated Grief: to know how to recognize the different types of suffering and bereavement.

## 4. Clinical Evaluation and Diagnosis

4.1 Physical symptoms, signs, specific problems, and their treatment (anorexia, asthenia, delirium, mood, anxiety, sleep disorders): being able to recognize, diagnose and evaluate the clinical aspects in a multidimensional setting to modulate the intervention in the presence of the main symptoms treated in palliative care.

## 5. Pharmacology (DE)

5.1 Pharmacological references, guidelines for pain control, therapeutic withdrawal and therapeutic reconciliation: to be able to recognize the differences between acute, chronic, nociceptive, neuropathic and mixed pain and the main pharmacological strategies for their treatment; to know the principles of therapeutic proportionality and their application along the disease pathway.

5.2 Palliative sedation: indications, difference with euthanasia, jurisprudence: knowing how to manage palliative sedation (transient and definitive); know the problems and the drugs to be used.

## 6. Ethical problems with the incurable patient and his family (DE)

6.1. Bioethics: principles and legal protections, advance treatment orders, planning shared care: knowing how to explain, discuss and manage issues relating to the patient's end-of-life choices and the principles of managing ethical conflicts with family members and between the patient and family members.

## 7. Summary of the course through the examination of clinical and healthcare case studies (DI)

7.1. Summary of the main contents of the course through the evaluation of clinical cases: knowing how to correctly identify the need for palliative care, measuring fragility and complexity, evaluating the prognosis, and defining an Individual Care Plan shared with the patient and family.

## Prerequisites

Enrolment in the sixth year of the medical and surgical degree program.

Knowledge of the preparatory courses indicated in the Degree Course Regulations.

## Teaching form

Lectures also through the presentation of one or more clinical cases in an interactive way, where the main aspects related to the topics in the program are illustrated, providing the student with tools to independently continue the in-depth study of the topics covered.

A part of the lectures will see the presence of professionals working in Palliative Care Networks in order to encourage a multidisciplinary discussion.

- 3 lessons of 2 hours carried out in face-to-face mode
- 1 lesson of 3 hours carried out in face-to-face mode
- 1 3-hour exercise carried out in interactive mode in presence

Lectures will be held in Italian.

## Textbook and teaching resource

Italian book on medicine and palliative care, A. Caraceni, O. Corli, M. Costantini, Grassi, M. Maltoni, G. Miccinesi, P. Morino, C. Peruselli, G. Scaccabarozzi, V. Zagonel, G. Zaninetta, F. Zucco POLETTA EDITORE 2019, 732 pages.

Il mondo delle cure palliative. Manuale per giovani medici. A. Turriziani, G. Zaninetta, ESCULAPIO 2020, 528 pages.

Cure Psicosociali in medicina palliativa, a cura di L. Grassi, POLETTA EDITORE 2022, 256 pagine

Fondamenti di Medicina Palliativa, C. Chelazzi, R. De Gaudio, I. Iannini, G. VILLA, IDELSON-GNOCCHI 2023, 206 pagine

Selection of presented slides, educational material, selection of scientific articles provided on E-learning and/or the platform [www.progettodemetra.it](http://www.progettodemetra.it).

## Semester

Sixth year of the course, 1st semester.

## Assessment method

Written exam: closed-ended test with multiple-choice questions, within the Medical Clinic exam.

Oral exam: discussion on the topics covered in the lectures within the Medical Clinic exam.

## Office hours

By appointment, requested by sending an email to the instructor.

## **Sustainable Development Goals**

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY

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