

EAPC 2019

16th World Congress of the European Association for Palliative Care

Global palliative care – shaping the future

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Berlin: 16th World Congress of the European Association for Palliative Care

Palliative care as fundamental human right needs global networking of researchers, clinicians and politicians

#EAPC2019: More than 3.000 participants from around a hundred countries are meeting in Berlin / Successful Premiere: Two full day seminars focussed on „Paediatric Palliative Care“ and „Integration of oncology and palliative care“ / Hospice and Palliative Care: How is volunteering changing?

„Global palliative care – Shaping the future“: The 16th World Congress of the European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC) started today in Berlin and will focus on one message: Severely ill and dying patients need – together with their families – adequate access to an early, coordinated and continuous palliative care in Europe and around the world. The congress is supported by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

„Palliative Care must be part of the global health agenda“ was the clear statement of *Prof. Phil Larkin, president of the European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC)*, at the congress opening today in Berlin. The EAPC as a world player in the development and practice of palliative care has a voice that echoes the clinical and research experience as well as the policy engagement of its members. That was impressively demonstrated by more than 3.000 congress delegates from about a hundred countries – including participants from Australia, USA, Canada and Singapore – meeting in Berlin for a unique scientific international exchange.

Dr. Sèbastian Moine, chair of the scientific committee of the EAPC World Congress, emphasized that five years since the adoption of the Resolution on Palliative Care by the World Health Assembly, the EAPC World Congress in Berlin is perfectly timed to reflect progress in the global development of palliative care, but also to identify areas where more needs to be done. For better integration of palliative care in primary care Dr. Moine presented an upgraded version of the „EAPC Primary Palliative Care Toolkit“ endorsed by WONCA, the World Organisation of Family Doctors, with the words: „Here’s hoping for the dissemination of the palliative approach in primary care!“

“It is hard to see the global disparities in the provision of palliative care, as they have been highlighted recently in the report of the Lancet Commission on Palliative Care” stated *Prof. Dr. Lukas Radbruch, president of the German Association for Palliative Medicine* which is hosting the congress. “In Germany, we are implementing the Charta for severely ill and dying patients, initiated after the EAPC congress 2007 in Budapest, with the goal to get political and community support. In developing countries, suffering patients and caregivers still have to struggle to find access to pain medication – often in vain.” Acknowledgement of access to adequate palliative care as a human right by the international institutions and conventions is paramount. However, the discussion on Universal Health Coverage, one of the major sustainable developments goals of the United Nations, does not yet include any reference on palliative care.

It is a great honour that Prof. Dr. Detlev Ganten, president of the World Health Summit, will speak at the Closing Plenary of the Congress underlining particular synergies between the work of the World Health Summit and the work of the EAPC.

In Berlin, for the first time and organised by Dr. Julie Ling, CEO of the EAPC, there will be a dedicated paediatric palliative care seminar with about 900 participants. The programme reflects a range of contemporary topics and challenges in children's palliative care including clinical, ethical and political issues.

Similarly, a whole day will be dedicated to the integration of oncology and palliative care, organized by the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) and the EAPC jointly. *Dr. Anne Letsch, chair of the local organizing committee, co-chair of the scientific committee of the EAPC congress and board member of the German Association for Palliative Medicine:* „With the new advances in oncology, patients live longer, but often live longer with chronic diseases.” These developments require adaptations for the early and needs-based integration of palliative care for cancer patients.

The congress will end on the 25th May with an international symposium "Volunteers at the heart of Hospice and Palliative Care". This will highlight the value of volunteers, without whom hospice and palliative care would not work. This is also expressed in the EAPC Charter „Voice of Volunteering“ that will be presented at the congress. *Prof. Dr. Lukas Radbruch, president of the German Association of Palliative Medicine:* “This symposium will enable volunteers to network and share experiences – this is a one-time chance!”

The 16th EAPC World Congress shortly? Let's listen to *Phil Larkin:* „We who work in the field care as much about life as death, supporting patients and families to live and live well until the end. So, as the people of Berlin do, we should embrace life and savour every moment that this congress and this city will offer us over the next few days.“ Welcome to Berlin!

#EAPC 2019: <https://www.eapc-2019.org/home.html>

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