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Emotions play important role when certifying patients' terminal stage: Research

13. July 2010 09:37

A research conducted at the University of Granada revealed that emotions play an important role when health professionals have to certify that a patient is in terminal stage. To the purpose of this research, a qualitative study was undertaken with a sample of 42 participants. Participants were thoroughly interviewed, with the aim of analyzing the approach and language employed by health professionals treating terminally-ill patients



Physicians that have to decide whether an illness is terminal think that "there are not valid and adequate criteria for certifying that an illness is terminal". This is the conclusion drawn from a pioneer study conducted at the University of Granada, and recently published in the Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology (IJCHP).

For the purpose of this study, 42 health professionals were thoroughly interviewed. Of this group, 21 were physicians and 21 were nurses working with terminally-ill patients in hospitals in the province of Granada. Of the 42 participants, 22 were women and 20 were men with ages between 23 and 52. Of the participants, 17 worked in community health centers, 18 worked in public hospitals, 4 in combined units and 3 worked in private health centers.

This study revealed interesting findings. The answers given by the professionals interviewed revealed that the diagnosing of terminal illness in their daily work differs depending on the type of health centre -primary or specialized care- and the type of professional -physician or nurse.

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