

Public awareness of palliative care in Croatia

Zlata Ozvacic Adzic^{1,2}, Jasmina Krajinovic², Venija Cerovecki^{1,2}, Erika Zelko^{3,4}, Erika Balogh⁵, Ulrike Spary – Kainz⁶

1) University of Zagreb, School of Medicine, Department of Family Medicine, Zagreb, Croatia

2) Health Center Zagreb-Centar, Zagreb, Croatia

3) University of Maribor, School of Medicine, Department of Family Medicine, Maribor, Slovenia

4)Community Health Centre Ljubljana

5) University of Pécs, Medical School, Department of Public Health Medicine, Pécs, Hungary

6) Institute of General Practice and Evidence-based Health Services Research, Medical University of Graz, Graz, Austria

Introduction. An international study in Slovenia, Croatia, Austria and Hungary is being conducted with the **aim** to assess the level of awareness and understanding of PC among general public.

Methods. A community-based cross-sectional study on a sample of 1200 patients aged 18+ years attending their family physicians (FPs) during the study period, stratified by age, gender and region (Northwest, Central and Eastern, Adriatic region of Croatia) is being performed. Information on awareness and understanding of PC is being collected using a self-administered questionnaire (online or paper version) used in previous studies, adapted by Slovenian investigators and translated to Croatian.

Results. The preliminary descriptive results of Croatian arm of the study will be presented (134 respondents, Northwest region only, online questionnaire, August-September 2020). Majority of respondents reported to have some knowledge of PC (N=91, 67.9%) and perceived improvement in quality of life as the main aim of PC (N=103, 76.9%). The most common reported sources of information about PC were the media (N=101, 75.4%), friends and relatives receiving PC (N=35, 36.1%) or working within the healthcare setting (N=21, 15.7%). The top three perceived needs of patients receiving PC included relief of physical suffering (N=122, 91.0%), medical and nursing care at home (N=101, 75.4%), and support to family caregivers (N=56, 41.2%). The perceived place for receiving PC was the person's own home with support of professional caregivers (N=71, 53.0%), followed by own home with support of family caregivers (N=23, 17.2%), hospice (N=23, 17.2%) and hospital (N=13, 9.7%).

Conclusions. The preliminary results of this community-based study in Croatia revealed variable awareness and understanding of PC among the participants, with most information received via media and experience obtained through family and friends. Further research on an adequate sample of Croatian general population is needed.