

The social impact of compassionate communities on end-of-life care

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This talk will describe compassionate communities and cities and locate their theoretical and practice roots in a public health approach to palliative care. The reasons why this approach is important and how these practices complement a clinical approach to palliative care will also be described. The basic argument – and need - behind these developments is the importance of addressing questions of prevention, harm reduction, and quality and continuity of care outside the clinical encounter – the 95% of space and time in a patient's life. Without addressing this major part in the support and care of patients and their families palliative care becomes mere acute, episodic care and not part of the broader public health provision of care at the end of life . Finally, a summary of international developments and future challenges will be outlined.