

A Palliative Care Approach to End-stage Neurodegenerative Conditions

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Abstract

Introduction: Neurodegenerative conditions, such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and motor neurone disease, are progressive and incurable conditions that ultimately lead to a state of total functional incapacitation and death. These conditions are "terminal" and, therefore, should be managed with a palliative care approach. This article highlights some of the issues in caring for patients with end-stage neurodegenerative conditions from a palliative perspective. **Methods:** This review is based on evidence from pre-existing medical literature on the above subject and the authors' personal experiences and observations. **Conclusion:** Patients with end-stage neurodegenerative conditions have needs similar to that of advanced cancer patients. Therefore, the principles and practice of palliative care should be applied to such patients. This may also mean that palliative care training should be undertaken in nursing homes, where a large number of such patients are located.

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