

Life Stories: High Quality of Life until the End with the Narrative Medicine and the Storytelling

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Abstract : Background: A hospice narrative interview aims at putting the sick at the core of disease and treatment allowing them to explore their most intimate facets. The aim of this work is to favor authentic narration by leading towards awareness and acceptance of terminality and to face death with serenity. Narration in palliative care aims at helping to reduce the chaos generated by the disease and to elaborate interpretations on the course of reality, besides, the narration delivered to the doctor is fundamental and communicates the meaning given to symptoms. Methods: The narrative interview has become a regular activity in the Castellini Foundation since 2017. Patients take part every week, and for more days, in one hour sessions, in a welcoming and empathic setting and the interaction with the operator leads to a gradual awareness of their terminality. Patients are submitted with free answer questions with the purpose of facilitating and stimulating self-narration. Narration has not always been linear, but patients are left free to shift in time to revisit their disease process by making use of different tools, such as digital storytelling. Results: The answers provided by the patients show to which extent the narrative interview is an instrument allowing the analysis of the stories and gives the possibility to better understand and deepen the different implications of patient and caregiver's background. Conclusion: The narration work in the hospice demonstrates that narrative medicine is an added value. This instrument has proven useful not only in the support of patients but also for the palliative doctor to identify wishes for accompanying them to the end with dignity and serenity. The narrative interview favors the construction of an authentic therapeutic relationship. The sick are taken wholly in charge, and they are guaranteed a high quality of life until their very last instant.

Keywords : construction of an authentic therapy relationship, gradual awareness of their terminality, narrative interview, reduce the chaos generated by the disease

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