

## **Report for the OSI grant files and EAPC website**

I would like to thank Ms Amelia Giordano and all the people who helped me take part in the 11<sup>th</sup> Congress of the European Association for Palliative Care. I would also like to thank the organization who kindly agreed to sponsor my participation in the Congress. The Congress was held from 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2009 in Vienna, Austria.

The first day of the Congress was very important for me because I was able to see and learn how international congresses are organized (I also organize congresses in my country). The speech made by the Queen of Sweden and her presence at the Congress were a very moving experience for me. The Queen emphasized the importance of palliative care and made me realize and believe even more that my interest in palliative care makes sense. Even at home in Poland I am often asked why I take care of dying people and it is difficult for me to explain that. Then I think that it is easier for people to understand the problem when they experience it themselves and the Queen's personal experience conformed my way of thinking. I also liked the lecture by Prof. Dr. Andreas Kruse (Heidelberg) who spoke about the last year of life of famous composers and he played their music himself.

On the second day of the Congress there were a few sessions I had wanted to participate in but I had to choose only one of them. Being interested in pediatric palliative care, I focused on how the care is organized in different countries. There were also a lot of stands where I could get additional materials on children's hospices in Europe and the world.

'Spirituality – an Issue for Palliative Care' was another very important lecture. In the last phases of their lives patients often have problems understanding the spiritual aspect of their pain and suffering. Another important issue of the session was also the problem of depression in cancer patients. Being an academic, it was interesting for me to attend the lecture by Prof. Y. Engels who emphasized the necessity of education in palliative care in medical schools.

On Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, I attended the lecture 'Is palliative/terminal sedation just 'slow euthanasia'? an alternative to euthanasia? or something totally different from euthanasia?' The lecturer proved that the problem is very difficult but that the problem of sedation should be used in medicine and should not be mistaken for euthanasia. The afternoon sessions on medicines proved that each country uses their own programs of painkiller administration. I was interested in the efficacy of fentanyl nasal spray in the treatment of breakthrough cancer pain. I had also hoped to take part in the lecture on the legalization of euthanasia by Belgian researchers but they were not present at the session. I am against euthanasia so I was extremely interested in their arguments for the legalization of euthanasia.

Margaret O'Connor's lectures and posters were interesting because they emphasized the role of nurses and the necessity of their education. I would like to contact Ms O'Connor and cooperate with her to be able to use her experiences in my job.

The posters which were shown every day were also of great interest to me. They also enriched my knowledge about the problem. I admired the posters prepared by the Japanese teams ( they were technologically precise).

Summing up, I would like to say that the Congress was a very useful experience for me. I have already started sharing my knowledge and the materials with my colleagues and students. The Congress has broadened my knowledge about the variety of aspects of palliative medicine in different countries.

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