Informal caregiver research
Project managers: Prof. Dr. C. O斯塔特, PD Dr. S. Stiel

"Quality of Dying and Death"
The Quality of Dying and Death questionnaire (QoDD) which includes items on physical, nursing, psychological, and social aspects of quality of dying and death is one of the first international instruments considering the multidimensional approach of palliative care. In cooperation with the University Hospital Mainz, two versions – for informal caregivers as well as health care professionals – were translated into German and validated at two palliative care units. The aim of the study is to provide validated German versions with good psychometric properties for standard implementation in German hospice and palliative care institutions to measure quality of dying and death. The study is funded by the German Cancer Aid (Deutsche Krebshilfe e.V.).

"Experiences of family caregivers of deceased tumor patients – an analysis of physical and psychological symptoms as well as their burdens and needs"
Family caregivers are under severe strain. This often affects their physical and psychological wellbeing in a negative way. The project "Experiences of family caregivers of deceased tumor patients – an analysis of physical and psychological symptoms as well as their burdens and needs" of the research group evaluates and compares experiences of family caregivers of A) patients with a brain tumor and B) patients with non-brain tumors by using quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews with the caregivers. The results shall help to develop tailored support programs for family caregivers. The project which was completed in the report period was funded by the Johannes und Frieda Marohn-Stiftung.

Health care research
Project managers: Prof. Dr. C. O斯塔特, PD Dr. S. Stiel

"MRSA in end of life care"
Little is known about the effects that MRSA colonization and/or infection and the respective isolation measures have on end-of-life patients' quality of life and the health-related outcomes for the family members as well as on job satisfaction and work load of staff. The interdisciplinary multi-center study “MRSA in end-of-life-care” (project partners: Institute for Biomedicine of Aging, Prof. Dr. C. Sieber; Institute of Psychogerontology, Prof Dr. F. Lang; Chair for Health Management, Prof. Dr. O. Schoffski; Institute of Clinical Microbiology, Immunology, and Hygiene, Prof. Dr. C. Bogdan) uses a mixed methods approach. The aim of the study is to develop a patient-, family-, and team-centered approach to deal with MRSA-positive hospitalized patients during their last phase of life. The study is funded by the BMBF.

"Coordination Office Palliative Care in the network of German Comprehensive Cancer Centers”
The extent of integration of palliative care in German Comprehensive Cancer Centers (CCC) in Germany is unknown. Therefore, this scientific project aims at developing a “best practice strategy” for a systematic integration of palliative care in clinical care, education, and research. In a first project phase between May and August 2014, structured quantitative and qualitative interviews were performed with the heads of all palliative care institutions and additional external persons to investigate the current situation and structures of palliative care within these CCC. Upcoming projects parts will further investigate standards, quality indicators, and educational concepts and raise new research projects. The project is funded by the German Cancer Aid (Deutsche Krebshilfe e.V.).

"Care trajectories and survival after discharge from specialized inpatient palliative care”
Due to the multitude of structures and processes and the wide range of available generalist and specialist palliative and hospice care, little is known about the patients’ individual care trajectories after discharge or transfer from inpatient palliative care units (PCU) to other care settings. Therefore, this study surveyed the further care trajectory, indications for changes in care setting, symptom burden, general condition, overall survival and place of death of 245 patients after discharge. Insights into these trajectories will help to detect gaps in discharge planning and to choose an adequate network of care providers in the future.

Need for palliative care in patients suffering from heart, lung, and neurological diseases
Project managers: PD Dr. S. Stiel, Prof. Dr. C. O斯塔特
Up to date, patients suffering from non-cancer diseases are the minority in palliative care. Due
to demographic changes, patients with chronic illnesses such as cardiac insufficiency, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or neurological diseases will become more important in palliative care. Increasing percentages of non-cancer patients are expected in the future. To better prepare and define trends and changes in patient characteristics over the time, the work group analyzed and compared core data set from the German Hospice and Palliative Care Evaluation (HOPE), a national, long-term quality assurance project, from 2002 - 2005 versus 2007 - 2011. Additionally, a cluster analysis of cancer versus non-cancer patients’ symptoms and problems contributed to the knowledge about palliative care needs for this specific patient group.

Teaching

Our goal in teaching palliative care is to relate medical knowledge in specific aspects of palliative medicine (symptom control, communication skills, weighing possible therapeutic goals and treatment regimens in advanced disease, ethical decisions). We also try to support our students to reflect their perceptions and values related to advanced diseases, dying, and death. Almost exclusively, we teach small groups of students and our tutors come from all sections of the multidisciplinary team. Our teaching scope encompasses:

- Mandatory classes in palliative care;
- Elective course (symptom control, measures in dying patients, hospice work in Germany, ethical questions, nursing in palliative care, psychology in palliative care);
- Elective course (treatment of two virtual patients in a setting of case-based learning);
- Elective participation in rounds and team meetings;
- Talks on contemporary aspects of palliative care medicine (students, health professionals, and open to the public);
- Colloquium on scientific approaches in medicine.

Mandatory and elective teaching by the Division of Palliative Medicine is continually evaluated.

In addition to classes held exclusively by our Division, we take part in classes held by other disciplines of the Faculty of Medicine (e.g. Anesthesiology, Anatomy, Medical Process Management, Medical Psychology, Medical Sociology, Physiotherapy, Psychogerontology, Logopedics).

Meetings and International Training Courses

21. – 22.03.2014: 2. Wissenschaftliche Arbeitstage der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Palliativmedizin (DGP), Erlangen

Selected Publications