Palliative care in the WHO European Region: a call for action

What is palliative care?
It is a special care for people with life-threatening illness and their families.
It improves the quality of life.
It relieves pain and physical, psychosocial and spiritual suffering.
It benefits health systems, which can save money by using resources better.

Palliative care for everyone who needs it
For the entire disease trajectory: from the beginning and alongside the disease.
For all countries, regardless of their income level.
For adults and also for children.

Who needs it?
People who need palliative care dying each year in Europe: 4.4 million
People who will need palliative care by 2030: 4.9 million

Are we ready for the challenge?
65% of the European population has no access to palliative care services.
46% of European countries have no process for specialization for doctors in palliative care.
83% of European countries do not teach palliative care to all future doctors.

Consumption of main opioids

What are the barriers?
Excessively restrictive regulations for opioid pain relief.
Future health professionals are not taught about palliative care.
No specialization for palliative care professionals.
Poor public and professional awareness of how palliative care can help.
Cultural and social barriers.

What can countries do?
Policies
Revise laws and processes to improve access to opioid pain relief.
Education
Promote palliative care education for all health professionals.
Primary health care
Provide palliative care through primary health care centres and homes.

More information is available in the EAPC Atlas of Palliative Care in Europe: https://bit.ly/2FsPpox
More information is available at www.euro.who.int/en/palliative-care
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