

Palliative Care – A Core Competency for Neurologists

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When and Where does a Neurologist need to know the basics of Palliative Care?

- Catastrophic or Severe Acute Brain Injury
- Life limiting neurologic illnesses (LLNI) or long term neurologic conditions (LTNC)
- Organ failure (kidney, lung, liver, heart) :
 - approach to episodic and terminal delirium
- Terminal illnesses:
 - CNS malignancy,
 - Rapidly progressive dementias,
 - Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis

PC Basics for Neurologists managing Catastrophic Brain Injury

- Multiple etiologies (stroke, hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy, traumatic brain injury, etc) with similar outcomes: death or severe permanent neurologic disability
- Prognostication in the acute phase
- Breaking bad news
- Shared decision making
- Ethical and legal dimensions of withholding/withdrawal decisions
- Management of Chronic Disorders of Consciousness

PC Basics for Neurologists involved in the care of LLNI/LTNC

- **Basic Communication Skills:**
 - Informing the Diagnosis
 - Navigating the road ahead: Identifying signposts of decline
- **Managing Symptoms:**
 - Pain, Depression/Anxiety, Fatigue, Sleep issues, Constipation, Genito-urinary symptoms,
 - Recognizing Spiritual/existential issues
 - Dysphagia, Dyspnea, Nutritional problems
- **Caregiver assessment & support**
- **Planning for the end:**
 - Advance Care planning,
 - Indications for Interventions for nutritional and respiratory support
 - Heuristic decision making at the End of Life: recognizing dying

Key Learning Objective:

NeuroPalliative Care (NpC) is a platform subspecialty;

You need these skills across the whole range of neurology

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