

## Practical Guide for Pain Relief and Palliative Care

**José Antonio Córdoba Domínguez\* and Uriah Medardo Guevara López**

*Specialist in Anesthesiology, Resuscitation and Pain, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Autonomous University of Honduras, Tegucigalpa, Honduras*

**\*Corresponding Author:** José Antonio Córdoba Domínguez, Specialist in Anesthesiology, Resuscitation and Pain, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Autonomous University of Honduras, Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

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This work comments on a fundamental book for the popularization of the most important topics related to pain relief and palliative care. In five chapters, presented with simplicity and precision, the authors address several fundamental aspects: pain care and palliative care as a human right, the levels of health organization and their responsibilities with the terminally ill patient, the role of nutrition in terminally ill patients and psychological care and discussion of available medications for pain relief. The text, translated into two native languages of Mexico, is the result of the important work carried out by a group of professionals aimed at providing better palliative care in the poorest states of southern Mexico.

With the direction of doctors José Antonio Córdoba Domínguez and Uriah Medardo Guevara, Editorial Corinter has published an extremely interesting book: Practical guide for the relief of pain and palliative care.

I think it is necessary to highlight four essential aspects.

It is a book intended for the general public for the knowledge of the most transcendental, from the philosophical, ethical, psychological, family and pharmacological point of view of the increasingly current topic of the treatment of pain and essential practices for palliative care of dying patients.

It is written in three languages: Spanish, Tzotzil, and Zapotec. The last two are languages spoken by ethnic groups living in the territories of the South and South East of Mexico, which are part of the great most vulnerable human conglomerate in this vast territory.

The text is an important contribution to face these two great aspects to which contemporary medicine has emphasized, from the points of view of multiculturalism, interculturality and ethnicity.

The book is the product of the cooperation of a select number of collaborators specializing in Algology and Palliative Care, translators and illustrators.

The approach that the authors give to such a fundamental topic of current medicine, derived mainly from advances in health care, which allows increased longevity, is encouraging. But it is also essential to highlight that the argumentation of the text is based on the statements of a very important document or declaration that emerged on the occasion of the catastrophe that World War II meant: the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man, promulgated on December 10, 1948, which in one of its statements states: "the rights [are] inherent to all human beings, without any distinction of nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language or any other condition".

And, in article 25, of that same Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN General Assembly established, as one of the fundamental and inalienable human rights, the right to health and social welfare: "Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living that assures him, as well as his family, health and well-being and especially food, clothing, housing, medical assistance and the necessary social services; He also has the right to insurance in the event of unemployment, illness, disability, widowhood, old age or other cases of loss of his means of subsistence due to circumstances independent of his will".

The interest in caring for the dying with human warmth is not new, nor is the dedication of science to finding new routes and technologies for pain relief, especially pain in people who are in a precarious situation of your health induced by diseases like cancer and others that lead to death.

However, the emphasis placed on these issues is really new, placed in the very first place, in response to the aspiration of humanity contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that man without discrimination of any nature have within his reach the possibil-

ity of living life fully, mainly enjoying it without disease, with complete health, in its biological, psychological and social aspects and that in case the disease appears and turns out to be incurable, incapacitating and provoking suffering, characterized mainly by pain and the imminence of death the human has the possibility of being treated with all the means to which he has the right to ensure essential care to make the suffering of the pathology that torments him tolerable and for death to arrive and be accepted as inevitable and natural by the patient and his family and social environment.

The book develops these essential topics to address palliative care and pain relief in five chapters, each developed with extreme simplicity: its texts are available to the general public, mainly the sick person, their family members and their social environment, without forgetting to mention health agents located at the primary level of health care.

The first chapter, written by Olga Guadalupe Carlo Pérez and Guillermo Rafael Santiago Hernández, refers with very good sense to palliative care and pain relief as a human right. It has a political connotation, since the essential task of enforcing human rights corresponds to the States. In this sense, the peoples must fight tirelessly and without fear so that their governments are consistent with the fulfillment of human rights, the basis of healthy life as the true purpose of authentic democracy in which we are all equal and have the same rights and duties.

The second chapter, written by José Antonio Córdova Domínguez, explains step by step where the patient who requires palliative care should go and the relief of the symptoms that most cause unhappiness, disability and deterioration and that lead to death. The author emphasizes the need for early discovery of the disease in order to offer the patient the possibility of a curative intervention. In the case of not obtaining that supreme desire to cure the patient, he and his family must clearly know where and to whom to go, respecting the hierarchy of levels of care that must be exhausted in accordance with the urgency of care that evolution demands and the prognosis of the disease. The personnel of the different levels of health care must be fully informed of their obligations and the limitations of their knowledge and resources in order to decide in a timely manner to transfer the patient to a level of greater capacity and greater competencies. And so on until reaching the top level in charge of specialists and experts. The text places on a transcendental plane the role of health personnel - necessarily multidisciplinary - in the care of patients with incurable diseases.

The third chapter, by Ivonne Cruz Rojas, addresses the issue of nutrition in patients in need of palliative care. This topic is essential because, through its reading, health workers dedicated to the exercise of palliative care and pain relief will easily understand that adequate nutrition is essential to be able to maintain an energy level that allows life less uncomfortable, to Despite the disease, because, in the case of oncological diseases, it is an atypical organ that greedily consumes the nutrients that the patient ingests and for this reason it is necessary to take them in greater quantity and quality, to allow the patient to endure much better the attacks of the disease that, if not overcome, will end up overwhelming you, we know perfectly well. Thanks to proper nutrition, a survival that is not so full of suffering can be obtained for a longer time.

The issues of psychological care for terminally ill patients, contained in chapter 4, are authored by Hugo García Velasco. The pages of this section of the book emphasize psychological care for terminally ill patients and, almost certainly, suffering from intractable pain. This man or woman deserves to receive psychological attention to accept the disease as something unavoidable and to have the ability to make some final decisions in their life that give them internal peace and strength to assume the unstoppable together with their closest family. This desirable serenity will allow the patient to dispose of many things that will happen after his death to ensure tranquility and resignation to relatives and close people during the grief, which does not necessarily begin immediately after death but in advance from the time the patient and the family They learn that there is nothing to save their lives. Psychological guidance is essential and will not only be provided by the professional psychologist but also by the entire health team and by the family with proper guidance.

Finally, Doctor Uriah Guevara explains the pharmacological treatments available for terminally ill patients affected by pain. It explains the classic WHO analgesic scale, accurately details the different types of drugs, their contraindications, their adverse effects and the relief

that can be achieved with their use. It also defines the levels at which these medications can be prescribed and applied so as not to expose the patient to the danger of adverse effects that could complicate the condition.

For my taste, I would add one more chapter, to explain the link that the various artistic manifestations have with palliative care, so as not to forget the great support that, for example: storytellers, clowns, readers, video writing and writing workshops, etc. they would have to alleviate the last-day nightmare of terminally ill children. Dr. Uriah is an art lover and knows how to link many of the fine arts to his work as a writer and as a promoter of scientific meetings on these topics. The cover of this book is a good example.

Finally, I want to insist on something that seems really relevant to me in this presentation: there is no doubt that this book is the fruit of the idea of a fantastic group, committed to the well-being of their patients and that is rightly led by Dr. Uriah Guevara, who has made these palliative care and pain management issues the obsessions of her life. He has assumed with the undoubted courage of Quixote the fight - in all its aspects - to make valid the postulate of the Universal Charter of Human Rights in its article 25 that recognizes the inalienable right to health and to a full life free of suffering. Perhaps, later, the right of man to have a time to live and a time fully accepted by all to die could be incorporated.

Characters like Uriah Guevara and his army of collaborators are our contemporary heroes. They fight, with heroism and admirable dedication, against enemies of our homelands, personified by the diseases that take away our desire to live, if not for the timely palliative care that offers a worthy end. These are the heroes of our time, these are the wars in which we must engage with the courage and courage with which the fathers of our homelands left us a territory and a nation. This book is a formidable weapon.

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