

Desire of Hastened death in terminal cancer patient: analysis of compensation and factors associated

Poster session presented at the XXIII S.I.P.I. National Congress - "The network of the compensatory functions in the Adlerian theory and practice", Milan, 2012.

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Summary. The objectives of the study are to examine the desire of hastened death and the euthanasia request in terminal cancer patients, to identify factors associated with hastened death and to analyze it as a compensation. One hundred and thirty patients admitted to the Hospice Valletta in Turin have been subjected to a short semi-structured interview designed to assess thoughts of death, and to the following Rating Scales: Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), Visual Analogue (VAS) - which assesses painful symptoms - and the Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy-Spiritual Well-Being Scale (FACIT-Sp). The study has shown significant associations between HADS and VAS and between HADS and FACIT-Sp. Furthermore, the desire of hastened death was significantly associated with a poor functional status, pain, depression, spirituality and with the perception of being a burden for others. This study has shown how physical, psychological and existential distress factors are associated with the desire of death in terminal cancer patients. At the end of the life the desire of hastened death could represent an extreme attempt to free himself from distress and to affirm himself against the illness.

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