

BACKGROUND

The Global Institute of Psychosocial, Palliative and End-of-Life Care (GIPPEC) is devoted to promoting and developing interdisciplinary research that addresses the medical, psychological, social, legal, ethical, cultural and religious problems related to psychosocial and palliative care of individuals with advanced and terminal disease. GIPPEC aims to address interdisciplinary research questions, support international research collaboration and to build future research capacity. GIPPEC intends to generate meaningful evidence to inform local, national and global health policy, clinical practice and public awareness and to improve global access to psychosocial and palliative care for individuals with advanced and terminal disease. Research generated from GIPPEC will also inform debate regarding complex and controversial medical, legal and ethical issues related to death and dying.

GIPPEC aims, in partnership with other international academic centres, to generate research that would inform public policy, health systems, and clinical practice in the area of psychosocial, palliative and end-of-life care and to provide education to enhance practice and research globally. These and other issues in psychosocial and palliative care of individuals with advanced and terminal disease requires interdisciplinary expertise and global collaboration in order for them to be meaningfully addressed and for research findings to shape clinical practice, health care policy and health care delivery.

The overall vision of GIPPEC will be achieved by establishing and maintaining excellence in each of three program domains:

EDUCATION

The educational aims of the GIPPEC will be to enhance research skills relevant to palliative and end-of-life care in both faculty and trainees. This will be promoted by:

- Encouraging and supporting graduate research training in palliative and end-of life care in participating departments
- Visiting faculty and visiting students exchange with participating international units.
- Weekly presentations and workshops on interdisciplinary research projects by core and associate faculty and trainees and by visiting faculty and trainees.
- Development and evaluation of strategies to educate the public, health professionals and trainees in palliative and end-of-life care in developing and developed countries to eliminate barriers to access of palliative and end-of-life care for those with advanced and terminal disease.
- International symposia on critical topics in research in palliative and end-of-life care.

RESEARCH

GIPPEC will create a convergence of academic faculty from multiple departments and divisions and foster the emergence of collaborative research teams at the University of Toronto and with national and international partners. It will facilitate the application and integration of methods from the social sciences, humanities and from the health sciences to problems related to palliative and end of-life care and to the conduct of multicentre and interdisciplinary research. Collaborative research will include, but not necessarily be limited to, the development and evaluation of:

- Culturally sensitive and rigorous interdisciplinary research methods.
- Interventions to relieve suffering in patients and families with advanced and terminal disease and in bereavement.
- Health policy and health systems issues related to the availability of palliative and end-of-life care and its integration into the management of advanced and terminal disease in diverse settings and in developed and developing countries.
- Education of the public, of health professionals and of trainees in palliative and end-of life care in developing and developed countries.
- Legal, ethical, religious and cultural issues related to aggressive medical care in individuals with advanced disease and to assisted dying.
- Global strategies to support the availability of palliative care, including narcotic and other analgesic medication for optimal pain and symptom control, in the context of advanced and terminal disease.

KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

The critical mass of investigators locally, nationally and internationally will allow the generation of thoughtful and evidence-based contributions to policy, practice and education of health professionals and the general public. Education of the public will be linked to the faculty of GIPPEC and to the visiting scholars who will be invited to participate in meetings organized for the general public and organizations and groups with a special interest in palliative and end-of-life care.

An important outcome for GIPPEC will also be the measurable influence of research emanating from this Institute on policy and on the availability and quality of palliative and end-of life care locally, national and internationally. This will occur as a result of the engagement of scholars and international partners from the Institute with key stakeholders in palliative and end-of-life care locally, nationally and internationally, including governmental and other decision-making health care bodies, professional organizations, public policy leaders and judicial bodies.

The knowledge generated from the GIPPEC will allow scholarship and evidence to enter the public debate and decision-making in health care and by legislative bodies in a domain that has often been dominated by rhetoric and strongly held personal opinion.

For more information, please contact us at gippec@uhn.ca