

Dear Readers,



Approximately 20 000 patients with lung cancer are treated in Poland every year. The vast majority of this group will at some point require palliative and end-of the life treatment and it is generally accepted that these are palliative care wards and hospices that manage advanced malignancies.

It has been recently recognized that clinical course of advanced chronic non-malignant respiratory diseases resembles that of lung cancer and also, portend poor prognosis. Chronic obstructive respiratory disease (COPD) is an incurable disease and the fourth leading cause of death worldwide [1]. Continuous disease progression (with the incidence of exacerbations) results in severe chronic breathlessness, fatigue and cough with commonly coexisting depression, anxiety and poor social and economic function. "The active holistic care of patients with advances progressive illness" [2] has been recently pointed out by Modlińska et al. as an integrated part in the treatment of severe COPD patients in Poland [3].

In the present issue the study by Gorska et al [4] showed that despite intensive treatment patients with severe COPD suffer from chronic respiratory symptoms, have frequent exacerbations and are socially isolated. Further, the study confirmed that patients in this group would appreciate the support from palliative medicine specialists.

Discussion started by Modlińska et al indicates the need for the cooperation between pulmonologists and palliative medicine specialists in defining the role of the latter in the control of distressing symptoms of chronic advanced respiratory diseases and in defining the principles of the end-of-the life communication in patients with severe COPD.

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1. www.ginasthma.com.
2. WHO. The solid facts — Palliative care. www.eur.who.int.
3. Modlińska A, Buss T, Lichodziejewska-Niemierko M. Palliative care in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. *Pneumonol Alergol Pol* 2007; 75: 311–313.
4. Gorska L, Krajnik M, Dames-Konstanska I et al. Need for palliation in patients with the severe COPD — a questionnaire study. *Adv Palliative Med* 2007; in the present issue

