

## Dear Readers of 'Palliative Medicine in Practice',



We are delighted to bring to you the last, 4<sup>th</sup> issue of the journal in 2016. The entire issue has been prepared in English to emphasize the international nature of the journal. This is also visible in the Scientific Board members list, which mainly consists of the international authorities in palliative medicine, pain and psycho-oncology. We would also like our journal to be a discussion panel, functioning in our country, as well as, abroad, which enables to exchange scientific experiences. In particular, we would like to encourage our colleagues from East-central Europe countries, who also come across similar cases and problems in everyday clinical practice with patients and carers, in economic and organizational aspects.

The current issue consists of original article, 6 review articles and case report.

The issue opens with the review article by Dr. Leszek Pawłowski, Prof. Monika Lichodziejewska-Niemierko and mgr Natalia Krzyżaniak „Organizational issues and major problems of palliative care concerning treatment of end-stage renal disease in Polish residential hospices and hospital-based palliative medicine wards”. The article treats about the organization and issues concerning end-stage renal disease patients who need palliative care. The research was based on a survey and referred to the personnel of Residential Hospice and Hospital-Based Palliative Medicine Ward, who take care of patients with end-stage renal disease. The matter of availability and ensuring high quality healthcare for this group of patients still remains a serious problem. It is especially noticeable in case of misdiagnosis and absence on the ICD-10 list, which is currently the qualification basis of palliative care patients, what will hopefully change.

The first review article is „Current controversies in the assessment and management of breakthrough cancer pain” by Prof. Andrew Davies. The paper is devoted to the problem of assessment and management of breakthrough cancer pain. The problem is still frequently discussed, especially taking definition, diagnosis and therapeutic management into consideration. Prof. Davies, who is an authority in this field, presents an algorithm for recognition and the ways of therapeutic management in patients with breakthrough cancer pain, indicating the need for precise and reproducible clinical assessment and therapeutic management, adjusted to the individual patient's needs.

In the second review article titled “The development and implications of guidelines for care of people with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis”, Prof. David Olivier presents recommendations on the management of patients with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. The author underlines the necessity for multidirectional therapeutic management, which should include the patients' as well as carers needs.

In the next paper Dr. Muath Alduhishi in his „A proposed steroid card model for palliative care patients” describes the method of the implement and monitoring of treatment in the palliative care with the use of corticosteroids. There is no doubt that the usage of corticosteroids for palliative care patients is up to date. It is mainly due to frequent use of this medicine in different therapies and the limited scientific evidence confirming the validity of the management, which should includes potential benefits and risks. The further clinical studies will be probably necessary in palliative care patients.

The next review article „Pharmacological means to improve patients' mood. Are they effective and safe?” by Dr. Zbigniew Ben Zylcz is about the potential use of different medicines, used according to other indications, which can positively influence patients' mood. Undoubtedly, mental disorders, especially depression in cancer patients, mainly at advanced stage, are important, however, hardly known clinical problems. Any progress in this field is crucial for patients and carers.

In the review paper titled „An overview of pharmacist role in palliative care: a worldwide comparison” the authors mgr Natalia Krzyżaniak, Dr. Iga Pawłowska and Prof. Beata Bajorek, discuss in the interesting way the role of pharmacist in the palliative care teams in different countries, based on the comprehensive world literature

review. It seems that the pharmacists' role is underestimated but the good cooperation can bring both sides, especially patients, benefits.

The last and also very informative review article, is written by Dr. Adrienne Kegye, Dr. Ágnes Zanna and Prof. Katalin Hegedűs, titled „How does the suffering of cancer patients affect us? Reviewing the physical and mental well-being of hospice workers”. The authors describe the influence of the work in hospice on the mental state of the personnel taking care for the cancer patients. The work in palliative care is, on the one hand, very nobilitating and giving great satisfaction, but on the other hand, it is also connected with deep mental burden, mainly among medical personnel taking care of cancer patients.

The issue closes with the case report presented by Dr. Joanna Brząkała and the undersigned, with the neuropathic pain in a patient with retroperitoneal tumour. The paper is titled „The management of neuropathic pain in a patient with retroperitoneal tumour — a case study”. It presents the possibility of the improvement of effectiveness of pharmacological pain and depressive disorder, which in consequence, ensured significant mood improvement, increased activity and better quality of life.

Summing up the previous year, the relevant issue in palliative medicine was the financial improvement introduced at the end of 2016, especially in the stationary units of palliative care (departments and stationary hospices). However, the improvement is still far from AOTMiT recommendations, established together with experts in palliative medicine field. Another important fact is the development of a map of healthcare needs, which can be basis for applying by palliative care units for European Union funds. We are still struggling with the limits of contracting the number of medical services for palliative patients who need palliative care at home, queues and the limited development of ambulatory care.

The year of work and running “Palliative Medicine in Practice” lean towards reflections and summary. It is observed submitted manuscripts are from different theme areas, ranging from pain medicine, through other symptoms, to problems concerning psychosocial and spiritual sphere. It reflects the multi-disciplinary character of the patients care in a good way, but also care of families, which is shown in some papers. We would like to maintain the broad and complex attitude towards palliative and supportive care.

At this point I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those who contribute to the smooth functioning of the journal. I express my special thanks to the authors and mainly reviewers (the list of the Reviewers can be found on the journal website), who voluntarily devoted their time and knowledge for anonymous review. I would like to thank both, foreign and domestic Members of Scientific Board, especially to my Vice Editors-in-Chief for the continued contribution to the development of the journal. I express my gratitude towards the Editors team, Via Medica Publisher and the Managing Editor of the “Palliative Medicine in Practice”, who provide complex support and smooth publishing procedures.

I kindly encourage, Polish as well as foreign authors, to submit papers and comments on the selected topics connected with the journal's theme. Best regards and wishing you pleasant reading.

Yours faithfully  
Wojciech Leppert