

**[P1.3.17]****Interdisciplinary communication in primary palliative care: What do they talk about and how do they listen?**

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**Introduction:** In Belgium, general practitioners (GPs) work together with specialized palliative home care teams (PHCT) to deliver palliative care. When such healthcare providers from different disciplines work collaboratively to provide patient care, interprofessional learning occurs (learning with, from and about one another). However, the ways in which GPs learn through collaboration with PHCTs ('workplace learning') have not yet been described in literature. This study aims to describe the *number, nature and content of interactions* between nurses and GPs, and describe the *effect of this on GPs learning and behavior*.

**Methods:** Number, nature and content of encounters between GPs and PHCTs were drawn from the national registration database of palliative patients in Flanders, Belgium in 2010 (7000 patients). PHCTs' notes regarding GP contact were classified according to Eraut's 2007 typology of learning.

**Results:**

Registrations from 7000 patients were analyzed. 65% (n=3700) of all GPs in Flanders were involved.

GPs and palliative care nurses had at least once a week contacts with each other, mostly telephone calls (85%). Contacts were initiated only when problems were encountered.

The topics of the interactions were almost equally divided between physical, psychological and organizational problems. GPs seemed to learn mostly from 'discussion and reflection' (35%), followed by 'consulting other experts' (9%), 'listening and observing' (8%) and 'asking questions' (7%). In 90% of the interactions GPs followed the advice given by the PHCT.

**Discussion:** The important interactions between GPs and nurses from PHCTs reflect the broad range of needs of palliative care patients and aspects of teamwork and communication. Discussion and reflection can lead to shared decision making between nurse and GP on the care delivery and forms a learning opportunity for GPs. Palliative care nurses can act as facilitators. This study will serve as a benchmark for designing interventions to optimize learning opportunities.

**Keywords:** Interprofessional communication, Workplace learning, Primary care