

Poster 31: What matters to you?: A medical and art student collaboration to create immersive legacy memorials with gynecologic cancer patients anticipating end-of-life

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Topic

Quality of Life/Palliative Care

Objectives

Our pilot project aimed to help advanced gynecologic oncology patients bridge communications with their loved ones through letter-writing and the co-creation of immersive legacy memorials. Secondly, we aimed to increase discourse about goals of care and legacy through sharing patients' creations with their families and medical care team.

Methods

This was a multidisciplinary project between medical and media art students, and patients with advanced gynecologic cancer at a large safety-net hospital in 2024. Patient interviews were conducted based on "Dignity Therapy" and "Stanford Life Review", which were used to create a personalized letter written in the patient's voice, and an immersive legacy memorial art piece for the patient to give to their loved ones. Memorials were displayed at a celebration of life event open to patients and staff. Patients completed pre-project surveys to assess comfort with, and history of discussing, end-of-life topics.

Results

8 patients on non-curative treatments were recruited and 5 patients completed the project. Patients had ovarian (3), cervical (1) and uterine (1) cancers and had received a median 5 lines of chemotherapy (range 2-6). On recruitment, patients expressed a mean comfort level of 8.8/10 (SD: 1.6) in discussing end-of-life topics, but none had discussed their wishes with a healthcare provider. Upon project completion, memorials were displayed at the celebration of life (Figure). Medical and art students reflected that participation in the project was one of the most meaningful experiences in their education.

Conclusions

There is discordance between patients' comfort level discussing end-of-life topics and the frequency of these conversations with healthcare providers and family members. Student-led collaborative writing and art memorial projects may offer an approachable adjunct to end-of-life medical care, while offering foundational teaching for early medical and art learners.

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Abstract Table or Graph

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