Importance of advanced directives: Description of a complicated case in a palliative care unit

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Background
Terminally ill patients often suffer from physical and psychological distress despite treatments given by the caregiving staff. Therefore, there are commonly lead to significant stress among the caregivers in palliative care (hospice care) units.

Objectives
The present study is based on the case of a patient in a palliative care unit, whose management was considered complicated and stressful by the caregivers. The aim of the study is to:

1. Review the importance of advanced directives.
2. Review the indications and applications of terminal sedation.

Methods
The case of a 69-year-old male with end-stage widespread prostate cancer coming into the unit was selected. The patient had a documented history of terminal illness and was admitted for adjustment of his analgesic therapy. His stay lasted approximately 3 months. All the caregivers believed that the situation was difficult, because of the numerous symptoms and the patient's condition. They all thought that the patient could have been handled better. The means at their disposal for handling the case were judged as sufficient, but insufficiently used. The patient expired 3 days later.

Results
All the caregivers believed that the situation was difficult, because of the numerous symptoms and the patient's condition. They all thought that the patient could have been handled better. The means at their disposal for handling the case were judged as sufficient, but insufficiently used. The question was whether the patient could have been handled better. The means at their disposal for handling the case were judged as sufficient, but insufficiently used.

Discussion
The case illustrated how difficult it is to handle a terminal illness. It is important to remember that the aim is to give the patient a dignified death, not to avoid suffering.

Conclusions
Terminal sedation should be considered as a last resort in cases where the patient's condition is deteriorating. It is important to remember that the aim is to give the patient a dignified death, not to avoid suffering.

References