



Children's Palliative Care in Africa

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Children's palliative care has developed rapidly as a discipline, as health care professionals recognize that the principles of adult palliative care may not always be applicable to children at the end of life. The unique needs of dying children are particularly evident across Africa, where the scale of the problem is overwhelming, and the figures so enormous that they are barely comprehensible: over 400,000 children in Africa died from Aids in 2003, and out of the 166,000 children a year diagnosed with cancer, 85% of these are in the developing world. Despite the enormous need, provision of children's palliative care in Africa is almost non-existent, with very few health workers trained and confident to provide care for dying children. The challenges of providing palliative care in this setting are different to those in more developed countries, contending with the shortage of physical and human resources in addition to the vast scope of the care needed.

Written by a group with wide experience of caring for dying children in Africa, this book provides practical, realistic guidance by improving access to, and delivery of, palliative care in this demanding setting. It looks at the themes common to palliative care--including communication, assessment, symptom management, psychosocial issues, ethical dilemmas, end of life care, and tips for the professional on compassion and conservation of energy--but always retains the focus on the particular needs of the health care professional in Africa. While containing some theory, the emphasis is on practical action throughout the book. *Children's Palliative Care in Africa* provides health care professionals working in Africa, and other resource-poor settings, with the confidence, knowledge, and capacity to improve care for the terminally ill child in constrained and demanding environments.

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