



## Surgical palliative care: coming back to the future of care

We are delighted to present this compendium of papers for this special series of the *Annals of Palliative Medicine* on the intersection of surgery and palliative care. As was emphasized by the American College of Surgeons Task Force on Palliative Care in 2005, the historical traditions and present practice of surgery are solidly motivated by the relief of suffering. Even when cure of disease is the immediate goal, bringing comfort to a patient and extending a life of quality are what ultimately makes many surgeons tick. By embracing this ethos and championing the incorporation of palliative care principles into surgical practice—and conversely, creating a space for surgical disciplines as valued contributors to the specialty of hospice and palliative medicine—two generations of surgeons have succeeded in defining the field of surgical palliative care (1). It is our pleasure to gather this series of works that describe the evolution of this process over time, review best practices for delivery of palliative care services and education, and signal exciting areas of progress and opportunity for further knowledge-generating work in this important niche.

One common thread uniting the contributions is the theme of persistent evidence gaps in surgical palliative care. This collection highlights experiences from surgical oncology, trauma, and emergency general surgery that have helped to build a case for greater incorporation of primary and specialized palliative care expertise into surgical practice. At the same time, these works remind us that shortfalls in available evidence continue to exist. Areas of opportunity for expansion of the evidence base for surgical palliative care include addressing racial and socioeconomic disparities, focusing on patient-reported outcomes of goal concordance and quality of life, and improving our understanding of the impact of educational interventions on surgical culture and practice.

Also uniting the works in this series is the notion that surgical palliative care can no longer be marginalized to the fringes of the surgical profession. Several authors provide us with insight into the development, refinement, and expansion of surgical palliative care—from an inspiring historical review of community building in surgical palliative care up to the present day, to novel analyses of when and how palliative care should be delivered to unique specialty populations such as surgically ill children or lung transplant patients, to an in-depth primer on minimally invasive pain management techniques that can be incorporated into surgeons' symptom management armamentarium. We hope you will appreciate from this collection just how much palliative care has grown in relevance and impact within the field of surgery over the past decades—a process firmly rooted in the principle that palliation is, and has always been, at the core of surgical practice.

We invite you to enjoy the following works and join us in gratitude to the authors for their contributions.

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