

Primary Palliative Care Team Provides Early Support

The Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute established a primary palliative care team embedded in the Department of Medicine in January. The new team, which consists of a Hertzberg-trained nurse practitioner and a social worker, will expand early access to palliative care for seriously ill patients and their families on the hospital's medicine service.

Early palliative care intervention can support patients in clarifying their goals of care. It

also promotes a culture of ongoing communication and information sharing between family and medical team. It can also help to reduce how long patients stay in the hospital and help them avoid being re-hospitalized after discharge. Ideally, patients should receive this added layer of support as early as diagnosis. Unfortunately, in many health systems early palliative care intervention is unusual. Health systems often lack the resources, while patients and physicians misunderstand the role that palliative care can play in improving quality of life.

“It's so important to support patients as early as possible. Our primary team in the Department of Medicine will

help us find the patients that need us before they develop a crisis,” said Dr. R. Sean Morrison, Director of the Lilian and Benjamin Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute at the Mount Sinai Health System. “This team will also allow us to

better meet the needs of all our patients and their families.”

The training program for Mount Sinai's primary palliative care team was developed by the Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute's social workers.



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The model was presented at the national conferences for the American Association of Hospice and Palliative Medicine and the Social Work Hospice and Palliative Care Network where it received an award for Excellence in Clinical Research. The program has helped to promote similar educational models throughout the country.

The Department of Medicine provides patient care in the field of general internal medicine as well as several subspecialties including cardiovascular, infectious and gastrointestinal diseases, liver, kidney and lung diseases, diabetes and immune system disorders. ■



Enhancing Quality of Life Through Massage and Yoga Therapy

Generous philanthropic support has allowed the Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute to extend its massage and yoga therapy programs to reach seriously ill patients throughout Mount Sinai Hospital. Integrative Medicine techniques provide important clinical support through massage therapy, yoga therapy, mindfulness-based stress reduction, meditation, therapeutic repositioning and more.



With symptom relief, comfort and stress management as the goal of each massage therapy session, the techniques are slow, deliberate and calming to promote deep relaxation and greater healing benefit. Guided relaxation can be included in the massage therapy session and relaxation music is also available for patients who would like to practice on their own. Our therapists know that each patient is unique and the massage therapy sessions are modified to meet each patient's individual needs.

Therapeutic yoga is a safe and gentle practice that includes simple yoga postures supported with props, basic relaxation techniques and guided

meditation. Again, this practice is adapted to each individual's needs and can include compassionate touch known as Reiki to enhance comfort and simple yoga breathing which promotes greater oxygen exchange. We have also developed a breathing meditation exercise for those who wish to continue the practices. Yoga therapy is offered to patients and loved ones who are experiencing anxiety, stress and other related burdens surrounding serious illness.

In an effort to expand access to such programs, the Hertzberg Institute



offers an annual massage therapy conference to train therapists who wish to work mindfully, skillfully and safely with seriously ill patients in the hospital setting. Over the past 12 years, we have trained 290 licensed massage therapists. With our ongoing educational outreach to clinicians and those in the community, we help them to better understand how massage and meditation practices can significantly lessen physical discomfort, stress and distressing symptoms and thereby enhance the comfort and quality of life for seriously ill hospitalized patients. ■

2017 Douglas West Memorial Lecture with LUCY KALANITHI, MD, FACP



Dr. Lucy Kalanithi delivered the 21st Annual Douglas West Memorial Lecture to over 500 clinicians, students, social workers and friends of Mount Sinai Hospital in April. Dr. Kalanithi is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Stanford School of Medicine and the widow of Dr. Paul Kalanithi, the author of New York Times Bestseller *“When Breath Becomes Air.”*

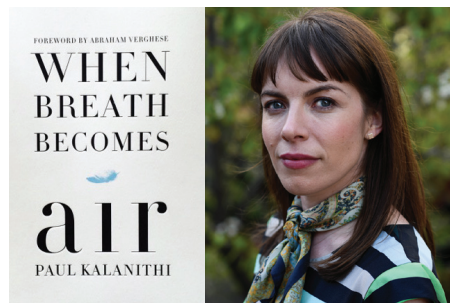
Paul Kalanithi was a 36-year-old Stanford neurosurgery resident when he was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer. A gifted writer with degrees in literature, philosophy and medicine, Paul spent the last two years of his life sharing his reflections on mortality and meaning. Paul’s last words of wisdom and hope, together with a moving epilogue from Lucy, became *“When Breath Becomes Air,”* published eight months after Paul’s death. The book was an overnight success, and has spent more than a year on the New York Times bestseller list.

Dr. Kalanithi spoke to our audience of her dual experiences as a physician and a caregiver. After paying tribute to her late husband Paul, Dr. Kalanithi spoke about the importance of communication throughout the course of serious illness. She recalled that “uncertainty is its own version of pain.” The memoir – a legacy project in its own right – became a tool for

communication. As a physician, Dr. Kalanithi now feels “a deeper sense of what it means to be a family caregiver,” she stated. She found a greater connection to the caregiver’s and family’s role and realized how that affects her patients’ treatment and outcomes. Dr. Kalanithi had significant family support during the time of Paul’s illness that together with mindfulness meditation helped her through the experience and through grief.

The Annual Douglas West Memorial Lecture was established by Susie West in memory of her husband and in honor of Dr. Diane Meier, Director of the Center to Advance Palliative Care and founding Director of the Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute, both at Mount Sinai. The lecture has become a successful forum for discussing palliative care, aging research and healthcare policy.

To view Dr. Kalanithi’s lecture, please visit: mountsinai.org/palliative.



SASKIA SIDEROW

From Caregiver to Advocate

When her mother and father-in-law both fell suddenly and seriously ill at the same time, Saskia Siderow and her family were thrown into a blur of life-or-death crises and heart-wrenching medical decisions that none of them felt equipped to make. With the encouragement of a close family friend, the Siderows asked for a palliative care consultation and everything changed. The family witnessed firsthand how palliative care relieves pain and suffering, coordinates care and supports patients and families to navigate difficult decisions.

“Nothing can prepare you for what we lived through as a family, but when we learned about palliative care, we felt like we had learned healthcare’s secret handshake,” said Ms. Siderow.

Five years later, Saskia has become a tireless advocate whose goal is to ensure that every person and family diagnosed with a serious illness knows the secret handshake. Previously a correspondent for the Financial Times in New York, she has contributed her time, skills and resources to palliative care experts who are changing the face of healthcare, transforming her professional career in the process.

Saskia serves alongside Susie West as Co-Chair of the Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute Advisory Board,



provides pro-bono communications services for the Institute and in May, will graduate with a Master’s Degree in Public Health from Columbia University. She is the Founder and Managing Director of Ormond House, a research and communications start-up focused on supporting high quality patient-centered care for patients and families living with serious illness.

Dr. R. Sean Morrison, Director of the Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute said, “Saskia has been an integral part of our advisory board and an invaluable friend to our program. We are so grateful that we have her expertise and insight particularly around our work in raising the public’s awareness of and access to palliative care. If every program had a Saskia, every patient would have palliative care!” ■

Lilian and Benjamin Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute Advisory Board Members

Susan L. West, *Co-Chair*
Saskia Siderow, *Co-Chair*
Deborah Berg
Peggy Danziger

Joseph Hertzberg
Meryl Rosofsky
Stephen Siderow
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FAMCARE-5: Innovation to Measure Family Satisfaction

Researchers at the Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute have designed a short and easy-to-use survey to measure family satisfaction, a critical component of healthcare quality for patients with serious illness. The new survey, FAMCARE-5, will streamline routine assessments of family satisfaction and support health system efforts for quality improvement and accountability around the country.

Satisfaction with care is a key indicator of healthcare quality, but it is difficult to measure across all fields of medicine. Patients with serious illness often have trouble completing satisfaction surveys because they are too ill, too medicated or too disoriented to report their experience. Family satisfaction is an important substitute measure for the patient's satisfaction in these circumstances and it is also an important quality measure in its own right. According to the Institute of Medicine, ideal care across hospital settings is family-oriented and considers not only the needs of patients, but also those of family and/or caregivers.

Katherine Ornstein, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor of the Brookdale Department of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine, and her team of researchers developed a brief 5-question version from the traditionally-used Family Satisfaction with End-of-Life Care (FAM-CARE) Survey. The original survey consisted of 20 questions which were found to be too lengthy and burdensome for families who are heavily involved in the stress of caregiving and decision making. Dr. Ornstein pared down the survey using a new technique that adapts the questions respondents are asked based on their previous answers. The redesigned survey, while shorter, measures family satisfaction with the same precision as the longer version.

The use of FAMCARE-5 promises to reduce the burden of assessing family satisfaction in both clinical and research settings while lowering barriers to high-quality measurements and high-quality care. FAMCARE-5 will help health systems detect variability in family satisfaction across hospital settings with greater sensitivity, ensuring that exemplary care is maintained and promoted for all seriously ill patients and their families. It will also lay the foundation for further research to improve clinical practice. ■



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PALLIATIVE CARE NEWSLETTER

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*“To cure sometimes,
to relieve often, to
comfort always”*

Fourth Century French Proverb