



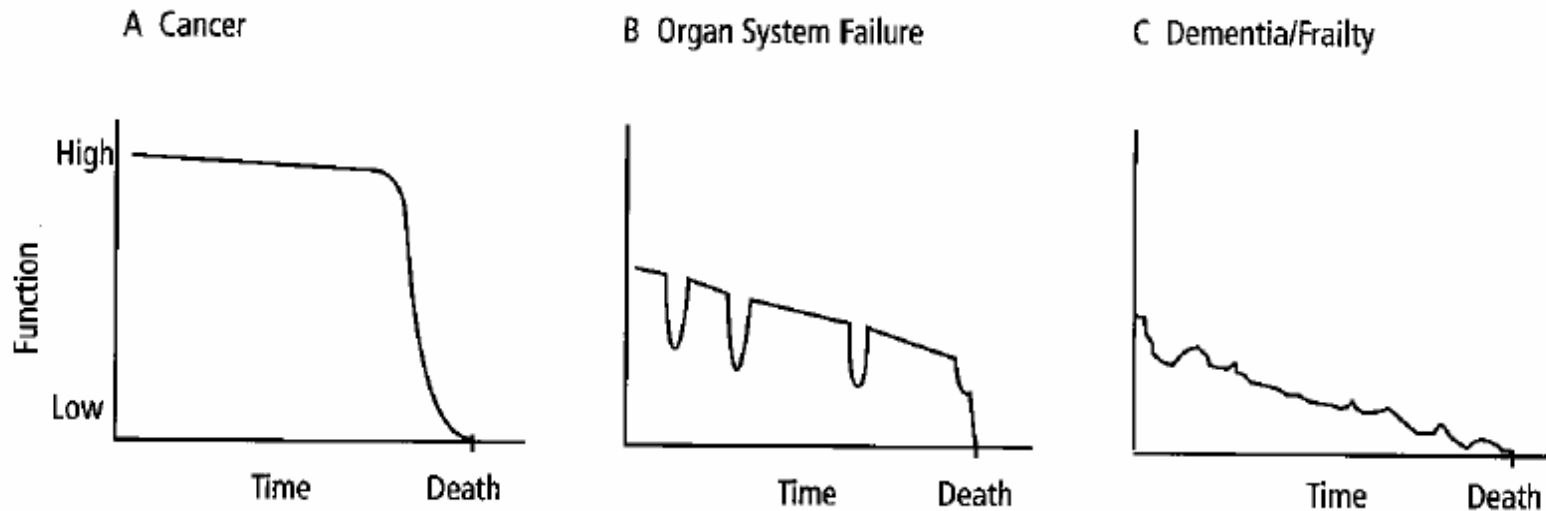
Mid North Coast Rural Palliative Care Project – Care Assistant Palliative Approach Course 2005

The Dying Process What is Happening?

Paula Hicks

Palliative Care CNC

Trajectory of Dying



*From: Lynn, J. 2001.p. 930. Perspectives on care at the close of life. **Journal of the American Medical Association***

The Dying Process

A natural process and slowing down of the body systems. The process is different for each and every individual and may vary from hours to days.

Indicators

- Sleeping more – may progress to unconscious state
- Reduced need for food and fluid
- Alteration in bladder and bowel function
- Changes in temperature – elevation - sweating

Indicators

- Changes in breathing – moistness – increased secretions
- Peripheral changes – cool to touch and blue/discooured
- Restlessness and confusion

Classification

- Insert tool 1.1

Providing Care at End of Life

- Pain
- Restlessness
- Unconscious state
- Communication
- Complimentary care
- Self care

End-of-Life Care

- Dying trajectory
- Goal more focused on existential issues – meaning, affirmation of life, spiritual comfort
- Unfinished business – forgiveness, reconcile
- Family/friends needs for comfort & information
- Anticipatory grief

Things to consider????

- Increased hospitalisations
- Terminal diagnosis without pursuit of life-prolonging interventions
- Marked physical or functional decline
- Decreased oral intake
- Progressive weight loss
- Increased proportion of time sleeping

More things to consider????

- Increased pain – reported or exhibited
- Behaviour changes
- Disorientation or other cognitive changes
- Statements about approaching death “I am dying”
- Social and/or emotional withdrawal
- Inward reflection, review of life

Summary of Priorities in Palliative Approach

- Quality of life
- Relief of suffering – holistic approach
- Formal symptom assessment & treatment
- Recognise the transition markers
- Collaboration with client/family/friends for decision making
- Timely consultation with specialist

Providing Care at End of Life

- Group work
- Consider the recent death of one of your residents –
 - What went well?
 - What were the challenges?