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European Journal of Palliative Care

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PALLIATIVE CARE is now so much a part of cancer care that it will be surprising for many to realise that it is a relatively newly defined area of health care. Modern palliative care owes its origins to the establishment of St Christopher's Hospice in London in 1967, and in the last 25 years, has developed extensively not just in the U.K. and Europe, but in developed and developing countries around the world. The World Health Organisation Cancer Unit has played an important role in promoting and facilitating the development of palliative care, and indeed it is significant that the Cancer Unit is now known as the Cancer and Palliative Care Unit. The WHO definition of palliative care is: "The active total care of patients whose disease is not responsive to curative treatment. Control of pain, of other symptoms, and of psychological, social and spiritual problems is paramount. The goal of palliative care is achievement of the best possible quality of life for patients and their families"[1].

Palliative medicine is a recognised subspeciality of general internal medicine in the U.K.[2] and Australia, with a training programme for future specialists in this area. There are now many academic appointments in palliative medicine in different parts of the world.

In recent years, there has been a proliferation of journals in this area, and recently, the publication of a major textbook, the *Oxford Textbook of Palliative Medicine*. A measure of the widespread interest in this subject is that this textbook is in its fourth reprint within months of publication. It is with this background that the European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC) plan to launch their official journal in April of this year.

The European Association was founded in 1988, and in a very short period of time has had an important impact in initiating and co-ordinating palliative care activities across Europe. At present, there are over 6000 paid-up members, most of these holding membership through their national association for palliative care. The membership reflects the multidisciplinary nature of palliative care, and includes not just doctors and nurses, but all disciplines involved in the care of patients with advanced and terminal disease.

The association felt it was important to produce a journal which would be truly multidisciplinary in nature and accessible to all of its members. The *European Journal of Palliative Care* will be a review journal, and is not designed to publish original clinical research papers. It will be published initially in English, French and other languages will be considered depending on the demands of subscribers. The journal will carry commissioned review articles, news of EAPC activities and of palliative care developments in general, meeting reports, book reviews, correspondence, information about forthcoming meetings, news about relevant legislation and political developments.

The first edition is planned for April 1994 and the journal will be published quarterly thereafter. Review articles will, in general, be commissioned, but the Editor welcomes suggestions or offers to write reviews of suitable topics. His address is Professor Geoffrey Hanks, Department of Palliative Medicine, Bristol Oncology Centre, Horfield Road, Bristol BS2 8ED, U.K.

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