

PallCHASE Webinar #3 : Climate Change, Natural Disasters and Palliative Care: No One Should Be Left Behind Oct 20, 2021

The world's eyes have been focussed on the need to protect and preserve our planet with its human and natural resources. COP26 was held a few weeks ago in Glasgow with many voices lending their urgency and wisdom into this debate in an effort to bring change.

This year the World Hospice Day theme echoed the needs of the most marginalised and advocated to 'Leave No One behind'. As PallCHASE we have been focussing on those who are 'left nothing' who live in fragile and humanitarian settings.

Our 3rd global webinar brought these 2 essential strands together with a fascinating, informative and challenging series of presentations and discussions. Liz Grant from the Global Health Academy in the University of Edinburgh set the scene with an overview of the extent of the challenge and how the palliative care community has such an important role in highlighting and helping to understand suffering. Our health is linked to the health of our environment and we need a compassionate, collaborative and focussed approach. "Climate change an important paradigm for palliative care in humanitarian response" Increasingly Integrating PC into the Civil Society Response to the Kerala Floods

In order to understand how these issues directly affect those with palliative care needs in humanitarian settings we turned to colleagues from Kerala in India where there have been severe floods affecting wide areas over 3 years but also where there is a well-established network of integrated and community based palliative care programmes. Athul Joseph Manuel shared how this integrated mode allowed for palliative care to be at the heart of the governmental response within the disaster control rooms and could directly engage communities in funding those in need during the emergency and in following up in the displacement camps and back into the community. People were supported with essential medicines, shelter and clothing as well as ongoing medical, psychosocial and spiritual support. Chitra Venkateswaran then highlighted a much-neglected area of mental health needs and the interface between psychiatry and palliative care. Her work has included reviewing the needs one year after the floods but also developing training programs to respond to the current COVID19 pandemic and ensuring that mental health and spiritual care is an essential component.

Our panel and participants shared questions and explored issues. Vinod Menon brought his more than 25 years of experience in the fields of disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and public policy analysis and his role as consultant to many in the humanitarian and government sectors. He encouraged us to drop the term 'natural' and speak about disaster since so many have a climate or man-made component and helped us understand the context of disaster preparedness and agreed to continue to offer advice to our PallCHASE network. We heard from Manju Biswas in Nepal where the palliative care teams have worked in post-earthquake support.

So where are we now? Our dear friend Rajagopal spoke for everyone by agreeing this area was new to palliative care and needed further exploration and research. This is exactly why we have the PallCHASE network and the webinar platform. Please catch up with this webinar if you missed it and bring your comments and ideas to the table as we move forward.

You can find the recordings of the webinar on our YouTube Channel here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgUtW8M4IEzWskzqh8E6pZY408AQkfnbb>