



Cancer and Palliative Care :

Pilot Project on Continuous, Comprehensive and Integrated Care towards the establishment of a National Cancer Center in Cambodia

Submitted by Douleurs Sans Frontières (Pain Without Borders), Phnom Penh, Cambodia

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BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

According to the statistics of the World Health Organization, cancer caused 7.9 millions of deaths in 2007 world widely. For the year 2030, twelve millions victims are predicted. Contrary to current understanding, cancer is not a disease of only rich industrialized countries: statistics of the WHO confirm that 72 % of deaths due to cancer occur in developing countries. The results of a Cambodian study in 2005 indicate cancer as the fourth cause of mortality (7.2 % and 11 000 victims), after infectious diseases (56 %), cardiovascular diseases (14.8 %) and other chronic pathologies (14.8 %). Projections to 2030 are even more alarming: cancer would be the second cause of death, with 25 %, as the mortality of infectious diseases is expected to decrease to 26.7 %.

All chronic diseases cause eventually pain and other symptoms, connected to the pathology itself or due to its treatment. Prevention and relief of these symptoms improve the Quality of Life of patients and reduce the disease's detrimental impact on their family and social life as well as on its economical consequences.

In its Recommendations for Cancer Care from 2005, the World Health Organization (WHO) urged that Palliative Care is a humanitarian emergency especially in developing countries where the patients reach the Health Care System in late stages of the disease, with few possibilities of curative result. The WHO recommends that a simultaneous and parallel approach is necessary to start national programs of prevention, early detection and cure, as well as to integrate the elements of Palliative Care into all levels of the Health Care Systems. Medical, psychosocial, physical and nutritive help should be available to patients, thus improving their Quality of Life and comfort.

In Cambodia, there is only one oncological unit, namely the Centre Marie Curie of the Khmer-Soviet Hospital in Phnom Penh. Due to the great number of cancer patients in the country, the occupation of beds in this unit is actually 300 %, and up to 60 % of the admissions receive only palliative care because of late diagnostics and expensiveness of curative treatments.

In this situation, the Ministry of Health and Calmette Hospital in Phnom Penh have started a project to found a Cancer Center at Calmette Hospital in the next three years. Being aware of the importance of Pain Management and Palliative Care in this context, the Board of Directors of this hospital has asked Douleurs Sans Frontières to implicate its expertise in the matter, in order to give the hospital personnel the necessary competence and motivation before the opening of the new centre.

PARTNERS IN OPERATION

- **Calmette Hospital** and especially the wards of **Medicine B**, a department reserved to indigent persons. All activity of this department will occur in close collaboration between DFS and the Board of Administration.
- **Khmer-Soviet Hospital**: The structure is actually responsible of curative treatment of cancer patients and their referral to Calmette Hospital or the future Mobile Home Care Team.
- **SOPO**, Saving Old People Organization, a Cambodian NGO, for the Home Based Care activities of the project.
- **Sovanna Phum**, a Cambodian NGO, for the Information-Education-Communication part of the project.

AIMS, ACTIVITIES AND EXPECTED RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

Global purpose: To develop a pilot project providing **comprehensive, continuing and integrated** care of cancer patients and patients suffering from other chronic diseases within three years.

Specific purpose 1: To improve the Pain Management and Palliative Care of the indigent cancer patients of Calmette Hospital within three years.

• ACTIVITIES

In Medicine B ward of Calmette Hospital, which is a department of Internal Medicine, 15 beds are reserved to cancer patients needing Palliative Care. For cancer patients, a close collaboration with the Khmer-Soviet Hospital is established, securing the continuity of curative and palliative care.

A multidisciplinary team of Pain Management and Palliative Care works in Calmette Hospital. This team will be composed of physicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists and physiotherapists having a special education in the matter. The mobile team serves all wards of the hospital, thus allowing the patients stay in appropriate wards for their specific treatment.

Pain Consultations for outpatients continues to function five afternoons a week for patients suffering from chronic pain. A specific equality fund has been set up to guarantee its accessibility to indigent persons.

A Committee Against Pain, consisting of members of different personnel groups and hospital administration sets up in Calmette Hospital. Its task is to conceptualize, integrate, coordinate and evaluate the hospital's activities related to care, teaching and research from the viewpoint of Pain Management.

• EXPECTED RESULTS :

- *Comprehensive Care of patients and families is improved in Medicine B.*
- *Inpatients in Calmette Hospital benefit from the multidisciplinary Pain and Palliative Care Team.*
- *The Pain Clinic is accessible to all patients with chronic pain, indigents or not, on five afternoons a week*
- *A comprehensive strategy of Pain Management and Palliative Care is set up, concerning the whole hospital.*

Specific purpose 2: To implement a sustainable **Home Care Service**, specialized in Palliative Care, responding to the needs of indigent patients suffering from cancer or other chronic diseases in Phnom Penh City.

- **ACTIVITY**

A **Mobile Home Care Team** sets up, consisting of different professionals specialized in palliative Care. This team offers the patients and families all elements of Comprehensive Care : improving comfort, management of pain, physiotherapy and psychological support. This team serves the inhabitants of the municipality of Phnom Penh.

The Home care Team works under the responsibility of the local NGO SOPO. DSF has a consultative role in technical and administrative matters. SOPO will work autonomously to ensure the continuity of this service at the end of the pilot project.

- **EXPECTED RESULTS**

→ *Patients have access to Comprehensive Palliative Care at home.*

→ *SOPO masters the technical and administrative aspects of Palliative Care and be able to work independently from the administrative and financial point of view.*

Specific purpose 3: To improve the knowledge and competence in Pain Management, Palliative and Supportive Care of all professional groups working with cancer patients and patients with other chronic diseases, principally at Calmette Hospital and Khmer-Soviet Hospital.

- **ACTIVITIES :**

A **four-sessions program** teaching theory and practice in Palliative Care of cancer patients sets up during three years. A team of Cambodian teachers is progressively in charge of this training.

On the demand of the Hospital director, a **series of training sessions** are organized for the doctors and nurses of all departments of Calmette Hospital, in order to motivate and sensitize them to pain problems in their own specialties. A prolonged stay of expatriate teachers in the hospital permits a continuous technical support in Pain Management to all local medical and paramedical actors, including pharmacy.

A **national seminar on oncological Palliative Care** is organized every two years in Phnom Penh.

In addition to continuous training, maintaining the competence of doctors and nurses already trained by DSF, the organization gives every year a course in Pain Management to students in nursing, physiotherapy and midwifery in the **Technical School of Medical Care** (l'Ecole Technique pour les Soins Médicaux) of Phnom Penh.

- **EXPECTED RESULTS :**

→ *Participating health care professionals of all specialties acquire theoretical and practical competence in Pain Management and Palliative Care.*

→ *Trained personnel immediately use their new knowledge in a positive atmosphere to Pain Management.*

→ *A multidisciplinary team of national trainers is able to teach Pain Management and Palliative Care to their colleagues.*

Specific purpose 4: To improve the knowledge in the community on cancer and Palliative Care and to induct health-promoting behavioral changes among general public during the next three years.

- **ACTIVITIES**

The medical knowledge and experience of DSF and the communication techniques of the NGO Sovanna Phum are combined in order to create short educative sketches informing the general public about cancer and chronic diseases as well as their therapeutic possibilities in Cambodia. These spectacles will be played in public places in the capital, and distributed by radio, TV all over the country.

- **EXPECTED RESULTS**

→ *A series of IEC (Information-Education-Communication) sketches realized every 6 months.*

→ *Messages are diffused throughout Cambodia.*

BENEFICIARY GROUPS

- **DIRECT BENEFICIARIES**

- **Patients** suffering from cancer pain and pain due to other chronic diseases, and their families.
- **Hospital personnel and students** who are trained in Pain Management and Palliative Care.
- **Staff of the NGO SOPO**, benefiting from the expertise of DSF.
- **The Cambodian population** to whom new health information, education and communication are available.

- **INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES**

- **Calmette Hospital** gets new patients with the improvement in the quality of care.
- The **oncological patients of the Khmer-Soviet Hospital** for whom health care takers have more time to devote to.
- All **students** having their practical training in Calmette Hospital.

SURPLUS VALUES OF THE PROJECT

➤ **Global Care:** All professional groups work together in order to improve the Quality of Life of patients and their families.

➤ **Continuing Care:** According to the principles launched by the WHO for cancer, the « health path » of the patients will be taken into account from prevention to Palliative Care. Besides cancer patients, this project offers continuity of care also to patients of Calmette Hospital having acute or chronic pain. The services of the Pain Clinic, the Multidisciplinary Pain and Palliative Care Team, and improved knowledge of the whole personnel in the wards ensure the continuity of care.

➤ **Integrated Care**

To the national policies : Responding to the principles of priority by the Ministry of Health, prevention, accessibility of care to the indigent persons, quality of care and training of health care personnel are integrated and realized in this project.

To **existing structures** (NGOs, hospitals, etc) will improve their mutual reference politics, thus integrating access.

To **Calmette Hospital**, the starting point and main target of this project, all initiatives are integral parts of the strategy of the institution, accepted by its administration and coordinated by CLUD, the internal committee joining the principal actors of this effort.

IMPACT OF THIS PROJECT ON EQUITY AND REDUCTION OF POVERTY

• EQUITY

False ideas and rumors about cancer circulate among population, causing exclusion and marginalization of cancer patients and their families. Improving knowledge and diffusing appropriate information allow a progressive and permanent change in the social status of these persons in their community. When patients have access to good quality cancer care, both curative and palliative, in-hospital and home care, this project ameliorates the equity of all Cambodians. It reduces discrimination due to sex, religion or economical status, with respect to the access to cancer care.

• REDUCTION OF POVERTY

Due to lack of information, desperate families search help from all kinds of useless and expensive therapies even from fraudulent sources. This project provide patients and families appropriate knowledge to make enlightened therapeutic choices and thus to avoid supplementary expenses and useless therapies. The social care included into the principles of good Palliative Care, aims to accompany the family even in the bereavement. It allows the families to develop an internal reorganization and strategy to meet the (economical) challenges in the future.

PERENNITY OF THE PROJECT

• TRANSFER OF COMPETENCE :

- Inside the DSF team
- Towards the technical and administrative team of SOPO
- Towards the national education in Health Care
- Towards the personnel of Calmette Hospital

• TAKING INTO POSSESSION OF THE PROJECT :

The Cancer Care and Education Centre of Calmette Hospital

This pilot project, hoped for by the direction of Calmette Hospital, is the first step in the foundation of a National Cancer Center in Cambodia in the next three years. From its beginning, the whole Centre and its personnel would be functional and able to relieve the suffering of the patients. In addition, through its good quality of care, Calmette Hospital would fulfill its task as a University Hospital Centre, being active in educating physicians, nurses, pharmacists and physiotherapists from the whole country in oncology, pain management and palliative care.

Educational activities

Competent and autonomous Khmer trainers diffuse their knowledge in the country, having a training and consulting role towards administrators of hospitals, NGOs and the Ministry of Health, as far it concerns oncology and Palliative Care.

Home Care

SOPO, the NGO specialized in Home Care, propose with its new partnerships a new Home Care Service to cancer patients, responding to a need which has not yet been addressed.

IEC (Information-Education-Communication) Activities

The IEC products and tools are available without expenses at MEDICAM (a common forum of 200 NGOs active in Cambodia), at the National Health Promoting Centre and at the National Institute of Public Health.

- **RESPONSABILITY OF RECURRING EXPENSES**

Pain Management and Palliative Care in Calmette Hospital: The Calmette Hospital takes care of the relatively **modest administrative expenses** caused by CLUD, with the objective to assure the continuity of its activity.

The income generated by the Pain Clinic and the In-hospital Palliative Care Team allows its financial autonomy. The gratuity of care of indigent patients in Medicine B is due to **an equity fund** of the State of Cambodia, in connection with its new program « New Strategy Framework for Health Financing » (2008-1015), part of its fight against poverty.

Home Care of indigent cancer patients:

As a part of this project, the Mobile Home Care Team extends its services to all cancer patients, independently of their financial capacities, **covering the expenses of care of the poor**. In the context of transfer of administrative competences, the direction of SOPO is able to search funds to assure the sustainability of this activity.