Pediatric Palliative Care and End of Life
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There are no simple answers when it comes to pediatric palliative care. This is particularly true when it comes to end of life decision making. Many issues may come up that differ from treating adults facing end of life decisions. For example, many children do not receive adequate symptom relief during palliative care [reference 1]. There are many resources available to help treat adults with life-threatening illnesses, however, they frequently are not suitable for the needs of dying children [reference 1]. There are few articles that talk about pediatric palliative care and end of life decision making and a lack of evidence based research in this area [reference 2].

The present study consisted of a targeted literature review and program recommendations. In collaboration with the pediatric palliative care team, a multidisciplinary group of students worked together to better understand families’ and patients’ expectations and desires for care around end of life decisions. Additionally, the pediatric palliative care team wanted to understand how to apply research finding to their work with patients and families. For this project, our team conducted targeted literature reviews focused on the following topics: end of life decision making, family-centered care, culture/spirituality, and pain/symptom management. The literature review was limited to studies of pediatric palliative care. While there were specific recommendations for each domain such as include siblings in the child’s care in a developmentally appropriate manner for family centered care and acknowledge anticipatory grief and create space for the grieving process to begin before end of life for spiritual, overall there seem to be theme of the importance of a strong doctor-patient/family relationship.
