

## **The meaning of research in palliative and end of life care in Switzerland: a manifesto**

*Network Palliative Care Research Switzerland (PCRS)\**

We, the members of the Swiss Network PCRS active in the interprofessional field of palliative and end of life care, recognise that Switzerland has made considerable developments in terms of research activities and networking over the last decade. It is reflected in the raising number of Swiss research projects and publications, the increase of academic positions, and the number of theses submitted at the Bachelor, Master and PhD levels. These developments are consistent with the goals of the National Strategy in Palliative Care (2013-2015). The research community has especially benefited from National Research Programmes (NRP 67, NRP 74), and from the programme «Research in Palliative Care» promoted by the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences. Consequently it is now imperative to rely on the results of these programmes and make research in palliative and end of life care sustainable.

Research in palliative care and end of life care covers a broad thematic spectrum. We acknowledge that there is a need and opportunity for networking and collaborating among diverse research disciplines (i.e. economics, health care, philosophy, psychology, sociology, theology and others) that are all investigating topics related to palliative and end of life care. Palliative and end of life care has therefore an enormous potential to propose innovative research encompassing some of the most important challenges awaiting us, e.g. demographic changes, migration flow, health economics, as well as ethical issues emerging from a sustainable society. All these issues require an important investment in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research.

Palliative and end of life care researchers in Switzerland furthermore aim to foster partnerships on an international level with countries such as the UK, Australia, the US and Belgium who are the current leaders in palliative care research. In addition, we believe it is essential to create collaborations with developing countries to facilitate their integration in international palliative and end of life care research.

We therefore stress the importance of a sustainable future for palliative and end of life care research in Switzerland by:

1. Addressing Swiss Universities: developing research projects that integrate interdisciplinarity as much as possible to promote high quality research in palliative and end of life care. Strengthening activities to improve the integration of palliative and end of life care research in all academic bodies in order to foster new academic positions in this field.
2. Addressing EU- Horizon, SNSF, Swiss Academies, foundations such as Swiss Cancer Research Foundation, Leenaards Foundation,: fostering research submissions in competitive funding bodies, whether public or private at both a national) and international level , and make all efforts to show the relevancy of palliative and end of life care research funding.
3. Addressing national research promotion organisations (Innosuisse, Gesundheitsförderung Schweiz, others): promoting the freedom of research and researchers to address relevant issues in palliative and end of life care, using innovative (including e-health and digitalization), valid and robust methodologies.

4. Addressing private foundations: working effectively to bring palliative and end of life care to the attention of the Swiss population and raise awareness in crucial stakeholders.
5. Ensuring sustainability of our existing research group (Palliative Care Research Switzerland, with direct link to the Swiss Society of Palliative Medicine and Care (palliative.ch) dedicated to promote Swiss palliative and end of life care research. This group should ideally include all the academics and chairs involved in palliative and end of life care research by focusing on:
  - (i) creating concrete opportunities for developing research contacts and supporting national and international networks (eg organization of a (periodical) national congress of palliative care research and events in all linguistic regions of Switzerland)
  - (ii) facilitating the education and training of the next generations of academics in palliative and end of life care (e.g. promoting multicentre, inter- and transdisciplinary doctoral or PhD- programmes in palliative and end of life care in collaboration with the Swiss universities, universities of applied sciences and vocational education, including international partnerships and visiting scholarships, providing a list of public and private institutions and foundations that support fields of research relevant to palliative and end of life care)
6. Improving access to data: collaborating with other institutions, such as the Swiss Health Observatory or the Federal Office of Public Health, to improve provision, accessibility and comparability of data on palliative and end of life care in Switzerland.
7. Addressing health care institutions and clinical practice: promoting the transferability of research projects and the implementation of research results into practice. We stress the importance of reducing the gap between research results and actual practice in all settings contributing to care (eg hospitals, nursing homes, GPs, outpatient care social services, compassionate communities, municipalities).

*November 2021*

*<http://www.palliative-care-forschung.ch/>*