Last Aid International

Implementation of an international working group on Last Aid courses for the public

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Last Aid International – Implementation of an international working group on Last Aid courses for the public

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Aims:
Although most people want to die at home many people die in institutions. Last Aid Courses can serve as basic palliative care education for the public and compassionate communities and may enhance the possibility of dying at the preferred place.

Pilot courses in Norway, Denmark and Germany have shown the feasibility and acceptance of the course.

The described project was undertaken as a part of the EUPCA Leadership Course 2017-2019 organized by the European Palliative Care Academy (1). It was designed as step 2 of the international project Last Aid International - the Last Aid Movement.

The main goals of the current project were to establish an international Last Aid working group with participants from 6-10 countries and to reach consensus on the curriculum for an international Last Aid course.

Methods:
Associations engaged in palliative care in European countries were invited to participate in an international working group. A variety of national organisations such as palliative care organisations, health-services, the church or other national organisations were invited. Participating countries send two delegates as participants to the meetings of the working group. All working group members reviewed the existing Last Aid Course curriculum that had been established and pilot-tested by Bollig et al. (2,3)

Results:
Consensus on an international Last Aid Course curriculum was established during a two-day meeting of the working group consisting of experts from different professions working within palliative care from seven different countries. The adaptation of the international presentation is finished. Work with translation into different languages and education of Last Aid course instructors in the participating countries is ongoing. At present national organisations from ten countries participate in the international Last Aid working group. In the meantime the International Last Aid working group is expanding further.

The EAPC has established a taskforce “Last Aid – Providing Palliative Care Education for Citizens” (3) to review the literature and develop an overview of the models for dissemination of palliative care knowledge to the public; to map education needs of palliative care in local communities in European countries; and to develop a consensus based curriculum and content for an international Last Aid course.

Fig. 1: The four steps of the international project Last Aid International - the Last Aid Movement

Step 1 (already accomplished within 2014 - 2017):
- Multi-national working group with participation of Norway, Denmark and Germany
- Pilot-study to test the feasibility, effect and acceptance of a Last Aid Course
- Feasibility of the Last Aid Course concept and acceptance by the participants have been shown
- Recognition by the German Association of Palliative Medicine (DGP - prize won in 2015)
- Presentation on international scientific conferences (e.g. Dublin, Montreal, Madrid, Edinburgh, Liepaja)

Step 2 (EUPCA-project 2017 - 2018):
- International working group on Last Aid with participation of 6-10 European countries
- Consensus on the curriculum and slide presentation

Step 3 (start during EUPCA-project from summer 2018):
- Cooperation with the EAPC (EAPC taskforce)
- Expansion of the international working group (at present 10 countries)
- Translation of the curriculum and slide presentation in different languages
- Testing of the feasibility, effect and acceptance of a Last Aid Course in all participating countries
- Delphi process on the Last Aid Course curriculum

Step 4 (Future perspective):
- Further expansion to a worldwide Last Aid working group and inclusion of other interested countries
- Advocacy

Conclusions:
The first experiences with Last Aid courses are very promising. The formation of an international Last Aid working group and consensus on a curriculum has been achieved in 2018. Research on the implementation and effect of Last Aid courses and a wider distribution and inclusion of other countries is ongoing. Meetings of the working group in order to evaluate and adapt the curriculum will be held with regular intervals of 1-2 years. In September 2019 the First International Last Aid congress will take place in Sønderborg, Denmark. More Information about Last Aid courses can be found on the project homepage

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