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COVID-19 Content

Update to the Fast-Tracked Article Entitled “Palliative Care Utilization Among Patients With COVID-19 in an Underserved Population: A Single-Center Retrospective Study by Haydar et al.”



To the Editor:

We would like to correct a misrepresentation in the fast-tracked article entitled “Palliative care utilization among patients with COVID-19 in an underserved population: A single-center retrospective study by Haydar et al.”¹

The sentence “In fact, the World Health Organization has issued guidance on how to maintain essential health services during the pandemic, but there was no mention of palliative care,” which cites a *Lancet* article, should be updated. On May 27, 2020, the World Health Organization published their *Interim Guidance, Clinical Management of COVID-19*, which includes an excellent palliative care section, as well as an Appendix section presenting the essential package of palliative care therapies.² The updated *Operational Planning Guidelines to Support Country Preparedness and Response* recommended that member states “Ensure comprehensive medical, nutritional, psycho-social, and palliative care for those with COVID-19.”³

Moreover, the World Health Assembly Resolution 73/1, *COVID-19 Response* adopted on May 18, directed member states to “Provide access to safe testing, treatment, and palliative care for COVID-19, paying particular attention to the protection of those with pre-existing health conditions, older persons, and other people at risk, in particular health professionals, health workers and other relevant frontline workers”⁴ OP7.7.

The International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care, a nonstate actor in official relations with

the World Health Organization, works closely with the World Health Organization Secretariat staff and with representatives of member states on request to ensure appropriate inclusion of palliative care in high-level documents, reports, and resolutions.

We would be grateful if you would update this misrepresentation, which is due to proximate publishing dates of the articles and documents concerned. Thanks very much in advance.

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4. WHA. WHA Resolution 73/1 (2020) “COVID-19 response”. Available from https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA73/A73_CONF1Rev1-en.pdf. Accessed June 27, 2020.