



SESSION 174

Managing Dyspnea in Palliative Care

Dyspnea is a common symptom for individuals approaching the end of life. Its causes are multifactorial. Treatment of dyspnea may target a specific cause, or especially nearing the very end of life, treat the symptom itself. It is an art, as much as a skill, to understand and know when and how to use interventions or medications for a patient in the palliative care trajectory. This session will review a palliative approach to dyspnea, noting how it might change during various stages of advancing illness. It will review the evidence and present current guidelines for the specific management of the symptom, but also discuss the real life issues that have less robust evidence.

1. Identify the importance of dyspnea in the context of advancing disease.
2. Recognize the broad differential diagnosis of dyspnea and determine when to address specific causes and when to address the symptom directly.
3. Understand the roles of oxygen and medications such as opioids and feel comfortable using them to treat dyspnea in the various points of the palliative care trajectory.