

AperTO - Archivio Istituzionale Open Access dell'Università di Torino

Personality and attitudes towards dying patients: An Italian pilot study among medical students.

This is the author's manuscript

Original Citation:

Availability:

This version is available <http://hdl.handle.net/2318/147606> since 2017-01-19T17:36:43Z

Published version:

DOI:10.3109/0142159X.2013.786809

Terms of use:

Open Access

Anyone can freely access the full text of works made available as "Open Access". Works made available under a Creative Commons license can be used according to the terms and conditions of said license. Use of all other works requires consent of the right holder (author or publisher) if not exempted from copyright protection by the applicable law.

(Article begins on next page)



**Personality profile and attitudes towards the dying patients:
an Italian pilot study among medical students**

Journal:	<i>Medical Teacher</i>
Manuscript ID:	Draft
Manuscript Categories:	Letters
Date Submitted by the Author:	n/a
Complete List of Authors:	Leombruni, Paolo; University of Turin, Neurosciences Miniotti, Marco; University of Turin, Neurosciences Torta, Riccardo; University of Turin, Neurosciences
Keywords:	Medicine < Profession, Undergraduate < Phase of education, Ethics/attitudes < Learning outcomes, Palliative care < Discipline, Community-oriented < Curriculum

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

Title

Personality and attitudes towards the dying patients: An Italian pilot study among medical students.

Dear Sir,

Nowadays doctors have to deal not only with death but also with the “end-of-life” stage. That requires specific skills and attitudes, but it remains unclear which are the medical students’ attitudes towards end-of-life care (EOLC).

For this reason we designed a pilot cross-sectional study to investigate the attitudes towards EOLC and their possible relationships with personality traits in a sample of second-year medical students who attended the Turin University. Ethical approval was obtained.

We used the Italian version of the Frommelt Attitude Toward the Care of the Dying Scale form-B (FATCOD-B) and the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI).

Of the 280 students invited to participate, 165 returned both questionnaires (45.5% male, 54.5% female).

Regarding attitudes towards EOLC, students obtained a mean total score of 113.4 (SD=7.8) (normative data are not available in literature), without significant differences between males and females.

Regarding personality profile, we compared total scores with normative data. Observed students scored significantly higher on Harm Avoidance and lower on the Reward Dependence, Cooperativeness and Self-Transcendence dimensions. Females scored

significantly higher than males on Harm Avoidance, Reward Dependence, Self-Directedness and Cooperativeness dimensions.

Regarding the associations between FATCOD-B and TCI, significant positive associations were found between Self-Directedness ($p=0.038$) and Cooperativeness ($p=0.040$), while Harm Avoidance showed a significant negative association ($p=0.002$).

Despite the limited sample size, this study is the first to show a relationship between personality traits of undergraduate Italian medical students and their attitudes towards the care of dying patients. Highly self-directed and cooperative students, with low Harm Havoidance, probably could develop a more mature character that help them to be more conscious of their own and others' life conditions and thus to be more prone to care for dying patients. Our results suggest that it may be important to consider also the personality profile for the career counselling of the medical students oriented to the EOLC context.

References

Cloninger CR, Przybeck TR, Svrakic DM, Wetzel RD. The Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI): A guide to its development and use. St. Louis, MO: Center for Psychobiology of Personality, 1994.

Frommelt KH. The effects of death education on nurses' attitudes toward caring for terminally ill persons and their families. Am J Hosp Palliat Care 1991; 8(5): 37-43.

Paolo Leombruni, Marco Miniotti, Riccardo G. Torta, University of Turin, Department of Neurosciences, Turin, Italy.

Email: paolo.leombruni@unito.it