

EP15.76 A comprehensive framework for family-centered decision-making in perinatal palliative care (PPC): an Italian single center's experience

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Objectives

PPC offers compassionate care for families facing life-limiting prenatal or neonatal diagnoses. Although advances in prenatal diagnostics have improved prognostic accuracy, uncertainty about outcomes remains. Integrating multidisciplinary expertise with family-centered communication is therefore essential. This paper presents a framework for family-centered decision-making in PPC, drawing on the experience of an Italian center and emphasizing prenatal diagnosis, multidisciplinary counselling, and neonatal observation to refine prognosis and align care with parental values.

Methods

PPC provides continuous care from antenatal diagnosis through birth, neonatal hospitalization, and bereavement. Eligibility is based not only on diagnosis but also on prognosis, expected treatment burden, and family priorities. It offers an ethically grounded alternative for families who continue the pregnancy. Neonatal observation helps reduce prenatal uncertainty by assessing the infant's clinical condition and guiding shared decision-making. The framework includes multidisciplinary evaluation, individualized palliative birth plans, and ongoing emotional support.

Results

The implementation of a PPC protocol in an Italian center demonstrates the value of coordinated multidisciplinary teamwork, early family engagement, and structured neonatal observation periods aimed at maximizing comfort and guiding care decisions. Training in communication and neonatal assessment is central to improving consistency, team resilience, and quality of care.

Conclusion

PPC offers a compassionate, structured, and family-centered model of care for situations marked by significant medical uncertainty and emotional complexity. By combining multidisciplinary expertise, clear communication, and individualized support, PPC helps ensure that families receive coordinated care throughout every stage of the process.