Rendering the ungraspable graspable
the use of metaphors in Swedish palliative cancer care

Hommerberg, Charlotte; Gustafsson, Anna W; Benzein, Eva; Sandgren, Anna; Semino, Elena; Koller, Veronika

Published in:
Palliative Medicine

DOI:
10.1177/0269216316646056

2016

Document Version:
Peer reviewed version (aka post-print)

Link to publication

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

• Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
• You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
• You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Take down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.
Good communication is of utmost importance in all forms of cancer care and especially so in the palliative context. To render the ungraspable graspable, metaphors are frequently used drawing on their capacity to capture the intangible in terms of more familiar experiences. For instance, to die from cancer can be described as “coming to the end of a life journey” or “losing a battle”. Metaphors are largely language and culture specific. Today’s increasingly multicultural societies require particular awareness in order to achieve dignified, individualized palliative cancer care.

This project aims to strengthen the scientific foundation for the use of metaphors in Swedish palliative cancer care. A secondary aim is to compare the use of metaphors in Sweden and the UK in order to reveal differences and similarities. Textual data are collected from a) internet-based blogs, where patients write about their illness-related emotions and experiences while being in palliative care, and from b) interviews with patients, family and health care professionals, where the focus is to investigate what it means to live a dignified life in palliative care. The two sets of data are analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative linguistic methods. First, the Pragglejaz procedure, a well-established linguistic method for metaphor identification, is used in order to manually identify metaphorical expressions in the material, develop analytic categories adapted to the Swedish language data and ensure inter-rater reliability. Second, the material is approached by means of corpus linguistic methods. The combination of research methods is inspired by the UK based MELC project. The data are currently being processed and the first results will be presented at the conference.

The project is funded by The Kamprad Family Foundation Sweden.