

**Title:** Serious Illness as Seen through Visual Art in the Palliative Care Setting

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**Statement of the Problem:** The primary focus in treating serious illness is often medical management. Early palliative care integration has been found to improve quality of life for both patient and family. In the palliative care setting, visual art has been shown as an effective means of expression, to help individuals gain capacity and feelings of self-worth during times of helplessness. Many healthcare providers have not engaged in this as a practice of care or understand its value.

**Background:** Literature review documented increasing evidence about the benefits of visual arts' therapies in decreasing symptom burden, improving quality of life, and providing support to healthcare providers.

**Purpose:** This humanities project's goal is to increase awareness and educate others about the experience of those suffering with serious illness and the role visual art can play to evoke emotion and empathy in the palliative care setting.

**Methods:** A 10-minute narrated video about serious illness was developed and a link was emailed to nurses and ancillary staff employed in HonorHealth Deer Valley. Post video, participants completed a demographic survey and four open-ended thought questions.

**Findings:** Eighty participants viewed the video and completed the survey. The majority were between 31-45 years, female, Caucasian, and nurses. Qualitative analysis included the following themes: Covid, death, cancer chemotherapy, art, spirituality, evoking emotion, and palliative care. The majority of respondents believed the video impactful and informative gaining a different perspective on palliative care, some (n=13) found it unhelpful. Challenges were technological with video, sound and material misinterpretation. Suggestions for improvement included: narration, music, gloominess, and using different art.

**Conclusion/Implications:** Using visual arts in the palliative care setting has shown to heighten awareness adding a different perspective in understanding serious illness. It is impactful in evoking an emotional response for a more empathetic feeling towards those who are suffering.