Objectives

- Describe a palliative care (PC) intervention used to manage target symptoms experienced by a 6-year-old male pediatric patient with a progressive brain tumor.
- Describe the interdisciplinary team approach used to plan and control challenging symptoms experienced by a pediatric patient with a progressive brain tumor.

Background: Children diagnosed with a pediatric brain tumor with a poor prognosis often experience poorly controlled target symptoms (i.e., vomiting, seizures, hiccups, anxiety, loss of function, neurologic symptoms) during end-of-life care. Ineffective control of symptoms can result in physical and psychosocial distress among affected children.

Case Description: In this case study, we will describe (a) a palliative care (PC) intervention used to manage target symptoms experienced by a 6-year-old patient with a progressive brain tumor, (b) the steps used by an interdisciplinary neurooncology team to plan and administer a continuous intravenous infusion of midazolam to control the target symptoms for this patient in the home setting, and (c) the role of the advance practice nurse during the home care management of this patient’s symptoms.

Conclusion: The PC intervention encompassed administration of continuous infusion of medications to manage commonly identified symptoms among children diagnosed with a progressive brain tumor. We propose that use of an effective symptom control PC intervention has the potential to decrease suffering, to promote quality of life among children dying a brain tumor, and to potentially foster a peaceful death in the affected child’s home setting.