

Advance Care Planning Dialogue Workshop

10 years of advance directives in Switzerland: an interdisciplinary public health perspective on advance care planning

End-of-life care and planning among older adults living in Switzerland

In the context of the Swiss country study of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), the study of social, regional, health, and attitudinal determinants of end-of-life care and planning in a nationally representative sample of older adults has become an important research focus of the multidisciplinary Swiss SHARE team based at the Faculty of Business and Economics (HEC) of the University of Lausanne and the Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences (FORS). The Swiss National Science Foundation supports this research through the project “Healthy Ageing in the Face of Death: Preferences, Communication, Knowledge and Behaviors regarding End of Life and End-of-life Planning Among Older Adults in Switzerland” which is conducted in collaboration with the Palliative and Supportive Care Service and the Institute of Humanities in Medicine of the Lausanne University Hospital and University of Lausanne. To share and further improve our research, we aim to examine and review the findings of our population-based and longitudinal study on attitudes and behaviours toward ACP in light of related research and actions carried out by researchers and professionals from other disciplines and fields and to foster a discussion on the current state of Advance Care Planning (ACP) and its future development in Switzerland in the framework of an ACP Dialogue Workshop.

Aims of the ACP Dialogue Workshop

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the law on advance directives (ADs) in the Swiss Civil Code, the ACP Dialogue Workshop aims to examine the development, implementation, and use of ACP and ADs in Switzerland over the last ten years by adopting a public health approach. Academic experts from different fields (e.g., medicine, ethics, sociology, psychology, law, economics), professionals involved in ACP promotion and completion, and policy and public health stakeholders are invited to engage in a multidisciplinary exchange of views. The main goals of the ACP Dialogue Workshop are (a) to elaborate a multidisciplinary, holistic, and multilevel picture of the past and current situation of ACP and ADs in Switzerland and the related challenges and barriers to more widespread and effective ACP and ADs; (b) to define consistent primary and secondary goals of ACP and ADs; and (c) to develop recommendations and priorities for both public health policy and research. We organize the ACP Dialogue Workshop in collaboration with ACP-Swiss.

End of life and public policy

Death and dying are now recognized as public health matters (Rao et al. 2002). The numbers of deaths and people affected by them is high and will significantly increase in the next decades due to population ageing. In addition, deaths mainly concern older adults and mostly occur after a period of severe or chronic illness(es). Therefore, contacts with healthcare providers and hospitalizations increase during the last phase of life, and deaths mostly happen in medicalized settings. Switzerland still faces challenges for optimal handling of the end of life, as shown by scientific studies carried out in the framework of the National Research Program 67. The Federal Council addressed (some of) these challenges by establishing four key areas for action and corresponding action plans published in 2020 in a report entitled “Improving the care and treatment of individuals at the end of life”. One of the four areas of action is “Raising awareness and encouraging reflection on the end of life”, which is

implemented through the development and promotion of an advance health planning concept by a national working group led by the Federal Office of Public Health and the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMW). Thus, ACP, including the use of ADs, has become a priority national public issue.

Building a comprehensive picture of ACP in Switzerland

After a decade of developing and implementing ADs in Switzerland, the ACP Dialogue Workshop aims to bring together experts, professionals, and decision-makers from different fields to propose a retrospective, current and prospective micro-meso-macro perspective on ACP and ADs. Our approach is based on the theoretical model introduced by Cohen (2021) for palliative care. Cohen suggests a three-core public health model that is a “combination of sciences, skills and beliefs directed towards improving and maintaining well-being for the full relevant population”. This public health model for palliative care combines the three traditional public health domains consisting of health promotion, health systems integration and service provision, and health evaluation (Dempers & Gott, 2016). Following this model, the ACP Dialogue Workshop will discuss ACP promotion, the integration of ACPs in health systems and in healthcare services, and ACP knowledge, utilization, and effectiveness in the population in Switzerland over the past ten years. This model will help us to portray a comprehensive picture of the state of ACP and ADs in Switzerland, identifying key interdependencies between the three public health domains and associated challenges. Furthermore, this model allows for a holistic view on ACP and ADs that does not reduce ACP to patients, their families, and health care providers but includes all of the relevant formal and informal macro-, meso- and micro-level actors involved in the ACP process. The invited speakers of the ACP Dialogue Workshop will contribute to drawing a comprehensive picture of ACP and ADs in Switzerland by examining the roles of the different domains of the below public health framework for ACP and helping to define the subcomponents of these domains. A conference report will synthesize the content and outcomes of the ACP Dialogue Workshop as a scientific paper published in a peer-reviewed journal.

Figure 1: Outline of a Public Health Framework for analyzing ACP development in Switzerland

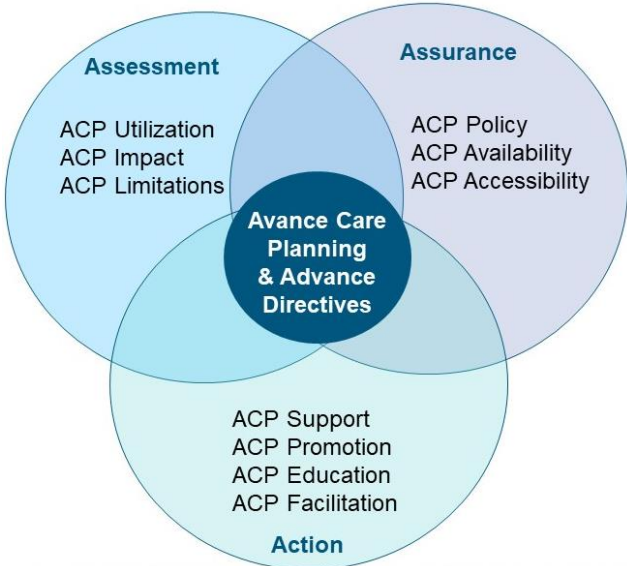


Table 1: ACP Public Health Domains to be informed during the ACP Dialogue Workshop

	Action	Assurance	Assessment
Definition	Promoting ACP in the community by education, awareness and individual empowerment. E.g.: ACP Swiss	Ensuring policy, human resources, and infrastructure to provide a supportive framework for the optimal implementation of ACP and ADs. E.g.: Medical ethics' guidelines on advance directives edited by the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences	Assessing and understanding ACP utilization, needs and gaps and evaluating associated policies. E.g.: studies conducted in the framework of PNR 67
Structure of workshop presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present goals - Describe action / intervention - Report outcomes, limitations, achievements and future development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present policy / program - Outline implementation - Report limitations, achievements and future development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present assessed topic (//research question) - Describe results - Develop conclusions

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