



The Evolution of End-of-Life Care

Pieter Botha

“Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”

~ Dylan Thomas, 1947

Death has undergone a metamorphosis



- Life expectancy
 - 1900: 32 years vs today: 71.5 years
- Main causes of death
 - Infectious/communicable vs non-communicable/chronic
- What changed?
 - Sanitation, drugs, knowledge & technology
- Consequences??

Aging populations and actuaries

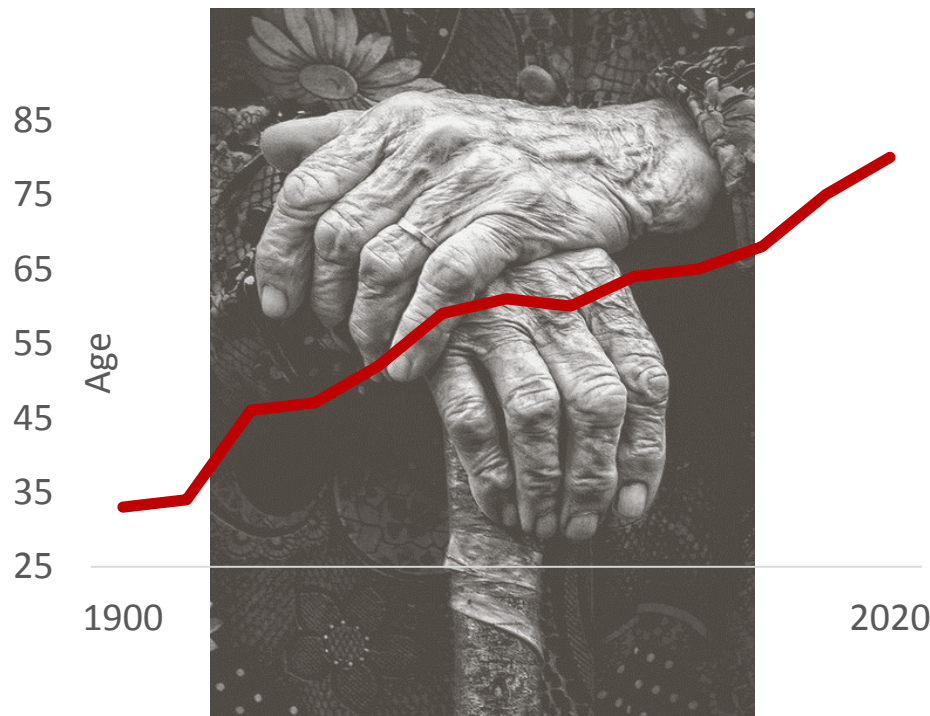


Photo: pinterest.com

End-of-life care evolution

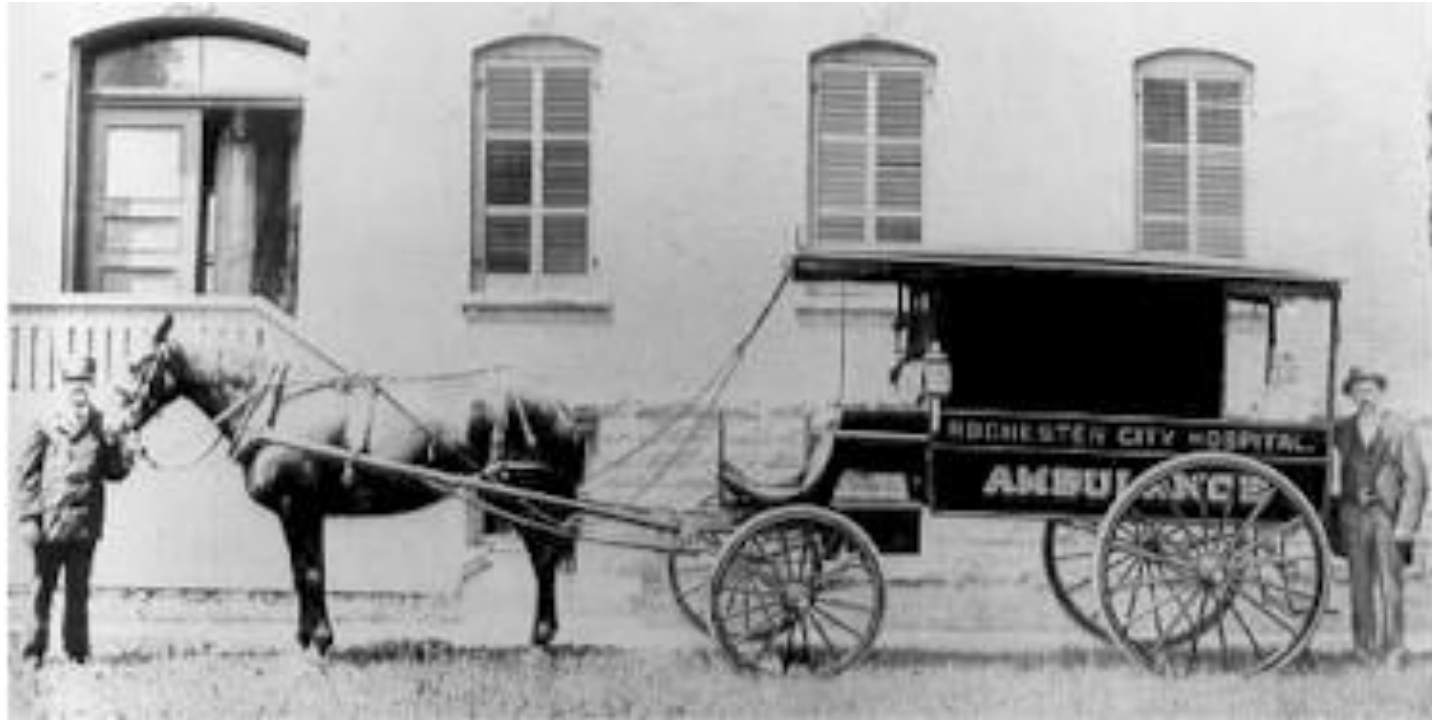


Photo: www.ummc.org

End-of-life care evolution

- Studies (US/UK) show:
 - Majority end up dying in hospital
 - Majority would prefer to die at home
 - Followed by hospice
 - Least preferred place – Hospital
 - Then nursing home/facility
- Reports of:
 - Highly mechanised deaths
 - Significant amounts of untreated pain
 - Depression and loneliness

End-of-life care evolution

- Hospitals are centres of excellent acute care
 - Aims to cure, reverse or halt
- Unachievable aims at the end of life
- Not geared towards chronic, supportive care
 - Neither is the training of professionals
- Resulting in a large mismatch between needs and care

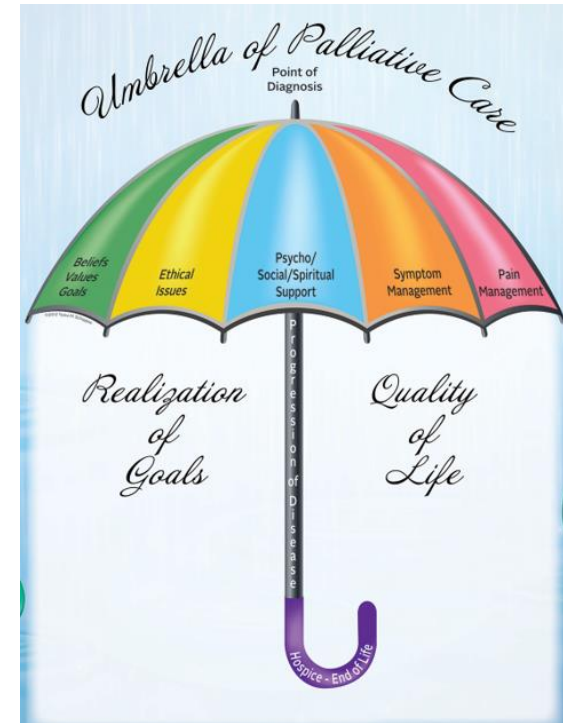
A “Sub”-Evolution



Source: <http://www.stchristophers.org.uk>

Palliative Care: Scope

- Multi-disciplinary approach:
 - Pain/Symptom management
 - Psychological/Social/Spiritual support
 - Communication/Education
 - Aligned with beliefs/values/goals
 - Considering ethical issues
 - Culminating in hospice care



Source: www.capc.org

Notes on Palliative Care

- Palliative Care is:
 - not “just” hospice care
 - not exclusively end-of-life care
 - not giving up on acute care
 - a cost-effective, proven conduit for informed decision-making
 - Results in better outcomes for ALL stakeholders

Challenges



Source: <http://ag.alltech.com>

Simple questions, elusive answers

- Needs?
- TCF?
- Gaps?
- Value-adds?



Source: www.rochester.edu

In summary



Source: www.whentheygetolder.co.uk

Questions?

Thank you!

#HaveTheConversation

Pieter.botha@uct.ac.za