THE MEANING OF OCCUPATION FOR PATIENTS IN PALLIATIVE CARE WHEN IN HOSPITAL

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CONCLUSION
The results confirm the importance of occupations and of patients’ having the option of and being given opportunities to take care of themselves.

AIM
To describe how patients in palliative care relate to occupation during hospitalization and the meaning it has for them.

BACKGROUND
Occupations are considered to bring meaning and purpose to people’s lives. This has been confirmed by studies involving people with a life-threatening illness who receive palliative care at home, but it has been little, if at all, studied in reference to patients who receive palliative care in hospital.

METHOD
• Eight in-patients, five men and three women, with various cancer diagnoses were interviewed once.
• Aged 53 to 75.
• Analysed using Qualitative content analysis.
• Result described in four categories and thirteen subcategories.
• Overall theme constructed as: Living with an uncertain future.
• The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine, Umeå University.

"I don't know what I could do during the time here...//...I have no control over anything. Things just happen and they can happen at any time. There's no structure at all and my selfdetermination is apparently not interesting here."

RESULTS
• Patients experience occupations as meaningful when in hospital.
• Patients desire to be able to handle their own needs as much as possible. Staff behaviour, the design of the environment, the lack of accessible occupations, and the degree to which patients could decide whether to receive or decline visits affected these desires.
• Patients experience a loss of their role, and a lack of control and participation in their own care.