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Facing Cancer and the Fear of Death: A Psychoanalytic Perspective on Treatment

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In *Facing Cancer and the Fear of Death: A Psychoanalytic Perspective on Treatment*, Dr. Norman Straker proposes that “death anxiety” is responsible for the American society’s failure to address costly futile care at the end of life; more specifically, doctors default on the appropriate prescription of palliative care because of this anxiety. This leads to unnecessary suffering for terminally-ill patients and their families and significant distress for physicians. To address these challenges in the culture of medical education, increased psychological support for physicians who treat dying patients is necessary. Additionally, physicians need to reach a consensus regarding the discontinuation of active treatments.

Psychoanalysts have traditionally denied the importance of death anxiety and report relatively few treatment cases of dying patients in their literature. This book offers multiple treatment reports by psychoanalysts that illustrate the effectiveness and value of a flexible approach to patients facing death. The psychoanalytic reader is expected to gain a greater level of comfort with facing death and is encouraged to consider making themselves more available to the ever-increasing population of cancer survivors. Further, psychoanalysts are encouraged to be more useful partners to the oncologists that are burdened by the irrational feelings of all parties.

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