



# Palliative Care: The 400-Year Quest for a Good Death

*Harold Y. Vanderpool*

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The long history of medical care for the dying has largely been neglected. It began in 1605 when physicians were challenged to enable persons to die peacefully. Today it includes palliation of oppressive symptoms, emotional and psychological care, and respect for the wishes and cultural backgrounds of patients and families. Especially since the 1990s, it embraces symptom-easing palliation for patients with severe life-limiting and chronic illnesses. Providing a detailed picture of contemporary palliative care, this book chronicles four centuries of the quest for a good death, covering the fight against futile end-of-life treatments, the history of life-extending treatments and technologies, the roles of nurses, the liberation of the dying from isolation in hospitals and hard-won victories to secure patients' right to choose.

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