

Filling the Care Gap: How KFSHRC's New Program Redefines Palliative Care for Young Lives

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, October 25, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Serious illness can be isolating at any age, but for adolescents and young adults, it often strikes at the most formative stages of life, when education, work, and identity are still taking shape. Across much of the world, and especially in the Arab region, palliative care systems have historically served either children or older adults, leaving this age group without support tailored to their unique needs.



At King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre (KFSHRC), that gap is finally being bridged. The hospital has launched the Adolescent and Young Adult Palliative Care Program, the first of its kind in the Arab world, designed specifically for patients aged 14 to 40 who are living with life limiting illnesses. The program delivers integrated care that addresses not only physical symptoms but also the psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of health.

Globally, the World Health Organization estimates that only 14 percent of people who need palliative care actually receive it. For young patients, this shortfall can be especially harsh. Studies show that when palliative care is integrated early in their treatment, it reduces pain, anxiety, and isolation, while improving decision making and overall well being.

KFSHRC's new program recognizes that for this age group, quality of life is deeply connected to autonomy and purpose. Many patients want to continue school or work, maintain friendships, and plan for the future even as they manage serious illness. The hospital's multidisciplinary team of palliative care physicians, nurses, social workers, and mental health professionals provides comprehensive support that respects these priorities while helping families navigate difficult choices.

The initiative builds on KFSHRC's broader investment in training and education. Its Advanced Palliative Care Fellowship Program recently became the first in the Arab world to earn triple international accreditation—from the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties, the European Society for Medical Oncology, and the International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care. This achievement ensures that the next generation of specialists is equipped to deliver evidence based, culturally sensitive palliative care across the region.

Beyond improving immediate patient care, the program aims to serve as a model for healthcare institutions throughout the Middle East. By defining palliative care not as an endpoint but as a partnership in living, KFSHRC is reshaping how health systems respond to serious illness—restoring dignity, autonomy, and comfort to young patients whose futures still deserve to unfold.

KFSHRC has been ranked first in the Middle East and North Africa and fifteenth globally among the world's top 250 academic medical centers for 2025, and recognized by Brand Finance as the region's most valuable healthcare brand. It is also listed among Newsweek's World's Best Hospitals 2025, Best Smart Hospitals 2026, and Best Specialized Hospitals 2026, reaffirming its leadership in innovation driven care.

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King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre

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