Supervisor Name: Drs. Rinat Nissim & Sarah Hales

Hospital/Research Institution: Princess Margaret Cancer Centre

Email: rinat.nissim@uhn.ca

Field of Research (2 keywords): end-of-life care; psychosocial oncology

Department: Department of Supportive Care

School of Graduate Studies Appointment (IMS, LMP, IHPME etc)? Yes/No: No

If YES, please name:

Project Title: Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) in the cancer context: a mixed methods study of patient and caregiver experience, quality of death, and bereavement morbidity

Brief Project Description (<300 words): Since June 2016, Canadian cancer patients have been able to legally pursue medical assistance in dying (MAID). Despite ongoing debates, commentary and editorials regarding eligibility, the process and the practice of MAID, we know little about the patient and caregiver experience associated with assisted dying requests or end-of-life outcomes. We are launching the first Canadian study to examine MAID from the cancer patient and caregiver perspective and to assess outcomes including the quality of death and bereavement morbidity. The primary objectives of this prospective mixed-method multi-site study are to: 1) explore the experiences of cancer patients requesting MAID and their caregivers in terms of distress, quality of life, and satisfaction with care; and 2) examine, after patient death, the outcomes of those who requested MAID, in terms of quality of death and caregiver bereavement morbidity. A secondary objective is to compare the above data to a previously collected data set of cancer patient deaths. Cancer patients requesting MAID at the University Health Network and Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre will be identified and asked to complete a questionnaire package assessing quality of life, death-related distress, spiritual wellbeing, depressive symptoms, and attachment style. Patient primary caregivers will complete a questionnaire package assessing quality of life, depressive symptoms, satisfaction with care, and attachment style. Purposive sampling will be used to select patients and caregivers for in-depth qualitative interviews exploring their experiences. 6 months post-death, a second recruitment phase will be conducted with bereaved caregivers of patients who requested MAID. Assessment will include quality of dying and death, satisfaction with care, depressive symptoms, grief, and stress response symptoms. The student will have the opportunity to be involved in relevant literature reviews and in the quantitative and/or qualitative data collection and data analysis of cancer patients requesting MAID and their primary caregivers.