

Psychologists in Palliative Care in Denmark

A survey amongst psychologists
working in palliative care in Denmark

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Introduction

Danish Association of Psychologists in Palliative Care and Oncology

- A formal network under the Danish Psychological Association
- 31 members nationwide (almost all the eligible psychologists)
- 2 meetings + 1 academic seminar annually
- Primary purpose: Formal representation on a political and organizational level.
- Secondary purpose: Networking and knowledge sharing among members
- Future tasks: Joint research project, establishment of clinical guidelines + pre+post graduate courses in palliative care and psycho-oncology for psychologists.



Introduction

The Danish health care system

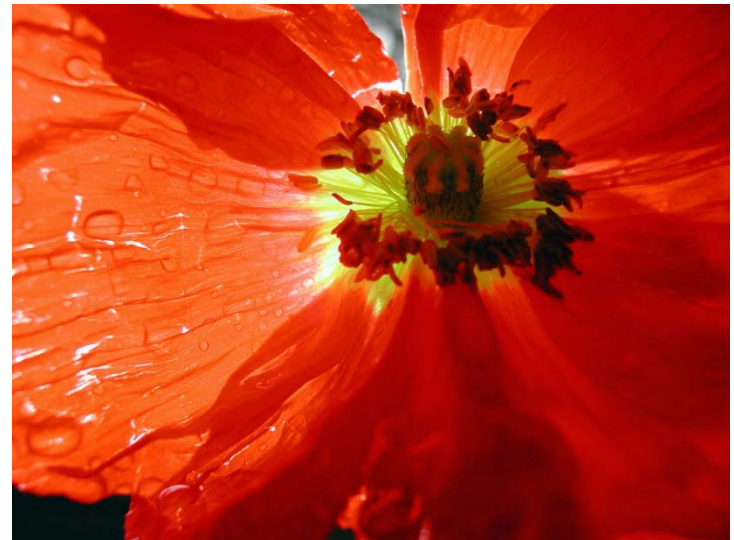
- 5.5 mill citizens
- Tax financed health care system
- GPs have a gatekeeper function
- Patients with complex palliative care issues can be referred to specialist palliative care/hospice
- Patients with psychosocial problems can be referred to psychologists in private practice
- Most psychologists operate with 2-3 months waitinglists



The study

- Aim: to investigate the role and tasks of psychologists in PC.
- A questionnaire
- Response rate: 79 % (N=30). Here amongst:

Main work setting	Count
Palliative care	12
Oncology	11
Research	4
Other	3



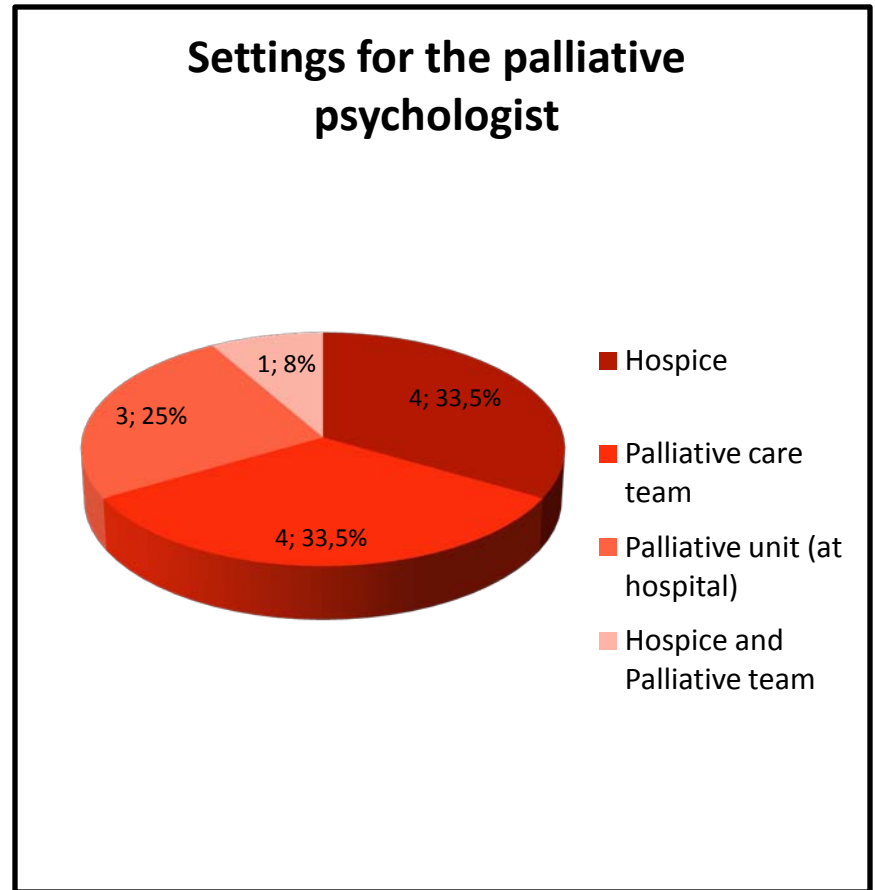
The questionnaire

- Themes:
 - Terms of employment
 - Work settings
 - Education
 - Tasks
 - Working relationships
 - Job satisfaction
 - Professional focus and theoretical point of view

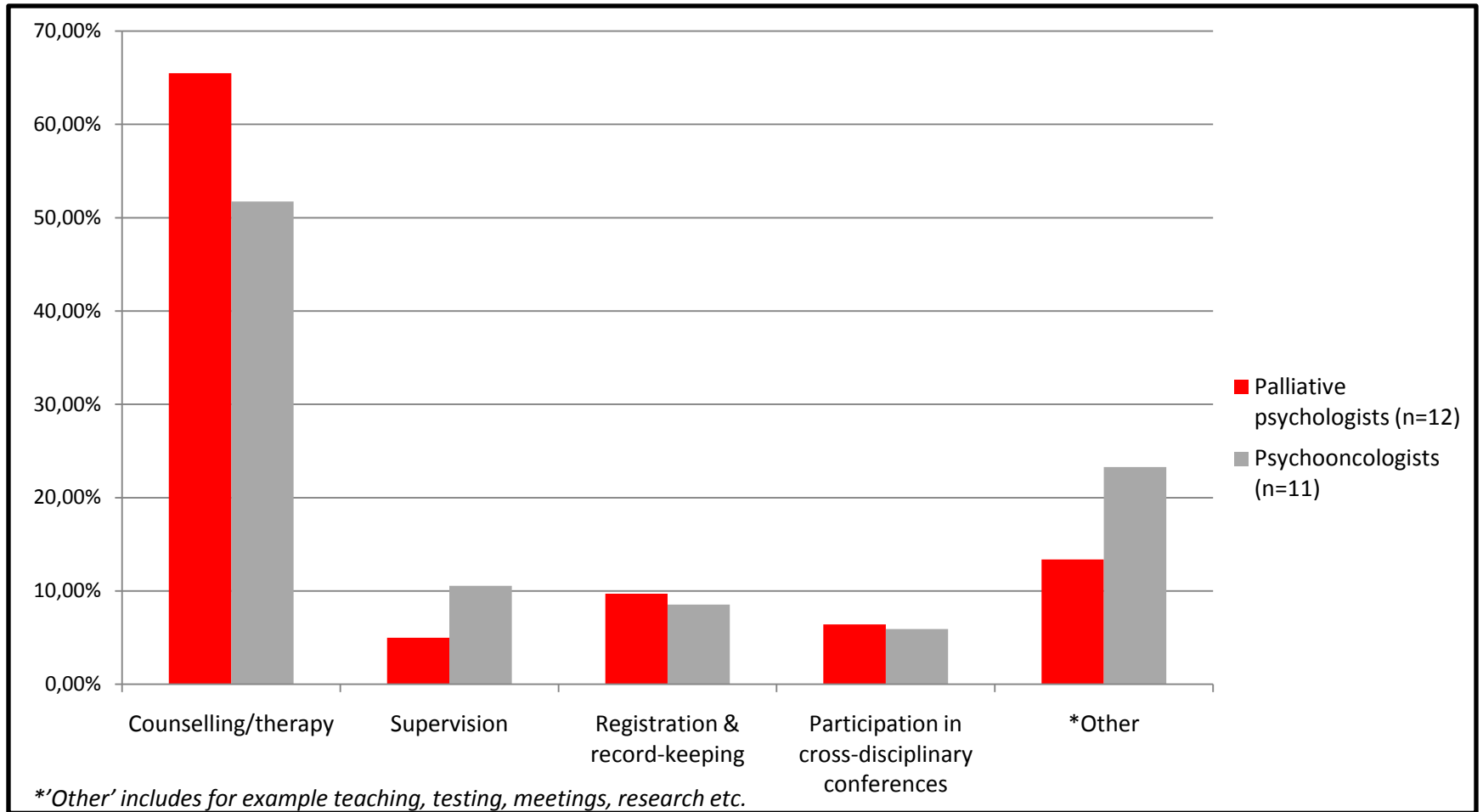


Settings for the psychologists

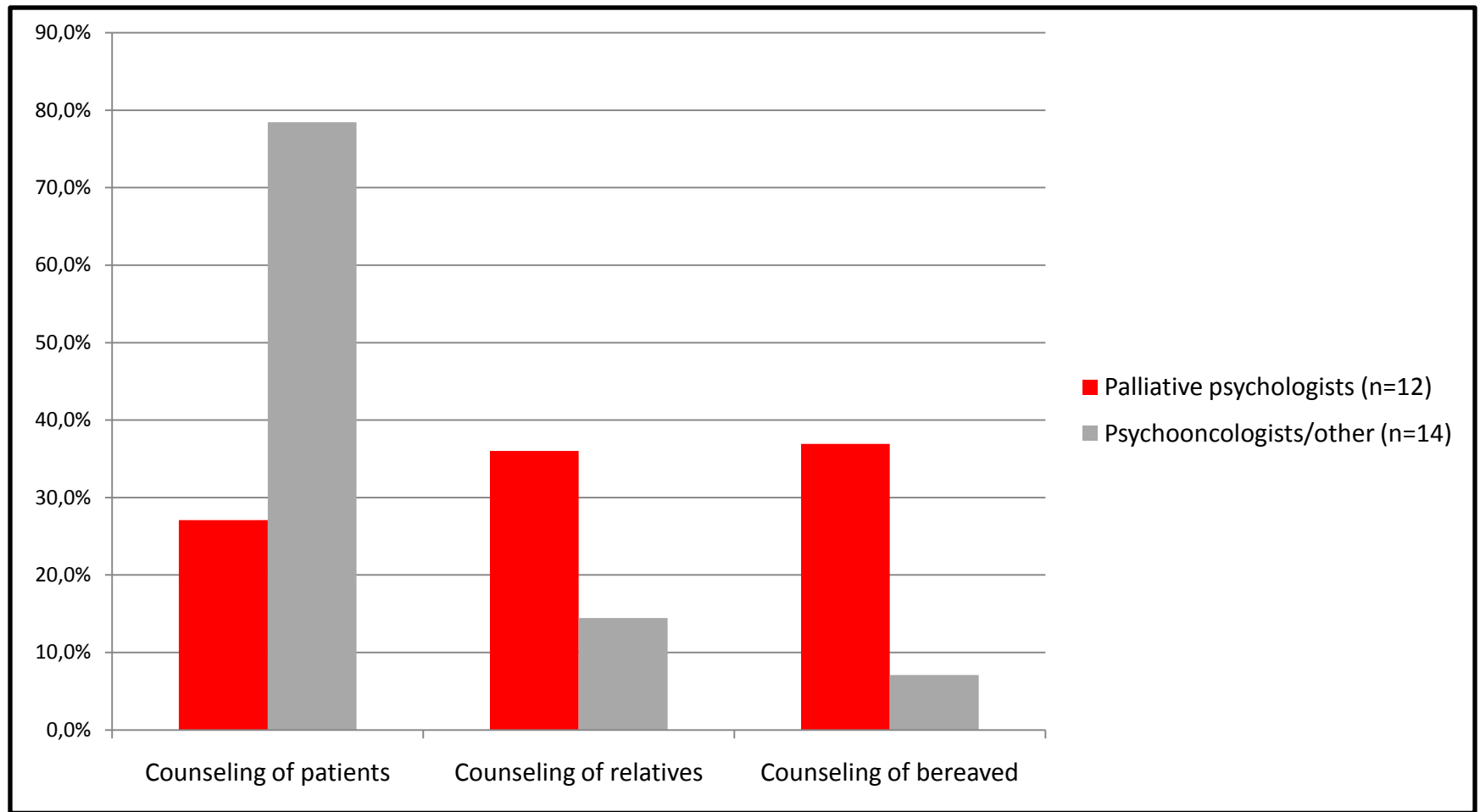
- ~ 2/3 of hospices in Denmark employ a psychologist.
- ~ 1/2 of palliative care teams employ psychologists
- Not full-time positions!



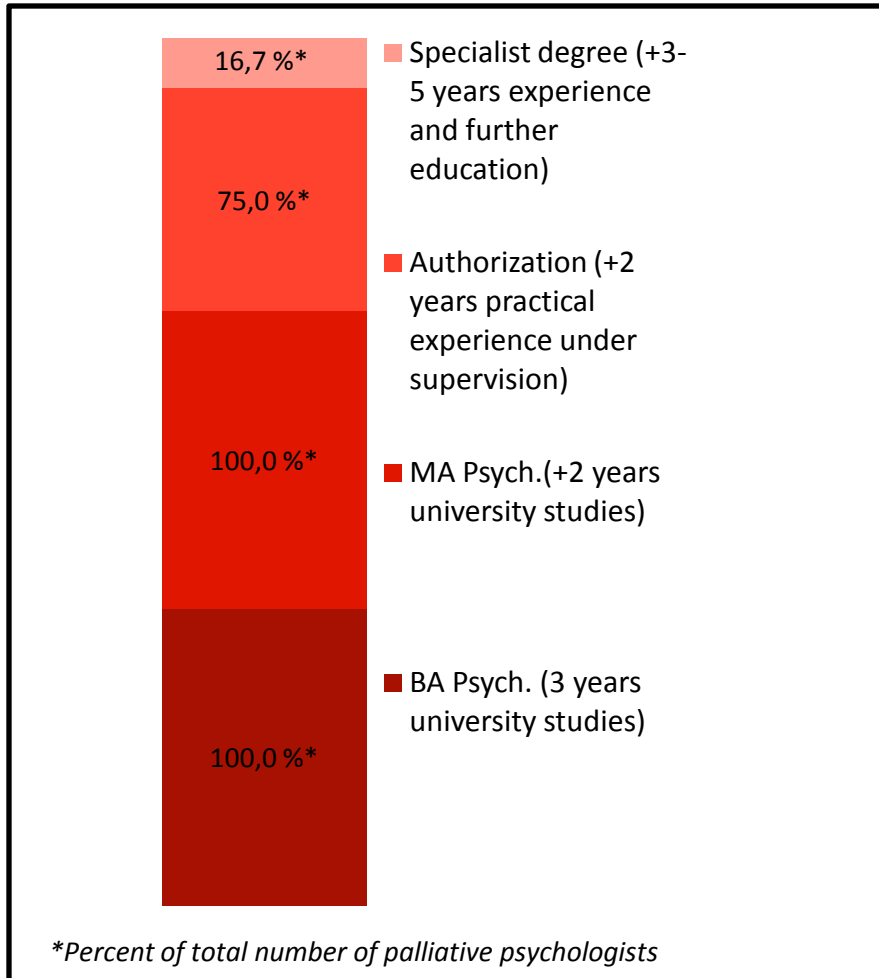
% time spent on different tasks: Palliative psychologists (and psycho-oncologists)



Time spent on different clients in individual counselling



Level of education



- The 2 specialized psychologists have specialist degrees in psychotherapy and health psychology, respectively.
- A specialist degree in palliative care is not possible.



Education: Further training and wishes for further training and education

- 83 % (n=10) of the psychologists have further training than their formal education, covering the following domains:

Narrative therapy

CBT

Psychodynamic

CBT for children

Bio-energetic analysis

Mindfulness

System-centered therapy

Existential psychotherapy

- 83 % (n=10) of the psychologists would like to have the possibility for further education within the field of palliative care.



On being a psychologist in palliative care

”I find it demanding to be one of few psychologist specialists in a field with 95 % nurses. It is not easy to make oneself heard with other perspectives (...) It has surprised me a lot that I have had to fight so hard to mark the boundaries of the psychological profession and competencies”



Thank you for your attention!

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