Euthanasia and certain forms of assisted dying are currently legal or decriminalized in just a few countries. Organizations concerned about end of life issues have issued several ‘declarations’ to promulgate their views on assisted dying/euthanasia to draw public attention, and to call for change. Several of them make reference to palliative care. Little is known about assisted dying/euthanasia declarations and their relationship to palliative care.

### Aims
1. To map the emergence and analyse the characteristics of assisted dying/euthanasia declarations in the international context
2. To establish the representation and framing of palliative care in these declarations

### Methods
**Collection of declarations**
2. Web site scrutiny of associations and organizations involved in advocacy on end of life issues

### Results
#### Timeline
- 62 assisted dying/euthanasia declarations published in English language were identified (1947 to 2016)
- Year of publication was identified for 51 declarations
- The timeline of 51 declarations suggests a progressive increase in their production
- Declarations with different viewpoints showed prominence over specific periods of time

#### Geographical scope
- National (64%)
- Regional (30%)
- International (6%)

#### Organisations involved
- Health care; 48%
- Political; 13%
- Religious; 27%
- Anti-euthanasia/assisted dying; 7%
- Pro-euthanasia/assisted dying; 5%

#### References to palliative care
- 41/ Assisted dying/euthanasia (AD/E) declarations made reference to palliative care (PC)

#### Importance of palliative care
- PC is the only way for promoting life and death with dignity
- PC is the best approach to uphold the worth of the human person at the end of life
- Availability of quality PC will minimise requests for AD/E

#### Relationship of AD/E to palliative care
- AD/E is contrary to the philosophy of palliative care and should not become part of it
- There will be need for AD/E if proper palliative and elderly care was guaranteed
- Excellent PC should not exclude the right to choose assisted dying

#### Call for action
- To promote palliative care
- To ensure high quality PC access and availability for all
- To listen to the voice of PC experts while discussing legalisation of euthanasia
- Palliative care should be adequately resourced and its education should be widely promoted

#### Commitment to palliative care
- To make access to PC a priority
- To assist the public in acquiring a better understanding of PC
- To help reframe end-of-life care communication to avoid inflammatory language (i.e. “pull the plug”)

#### Implications for palliative care
- Legalising AD/E will shift focus from improving PC to providing death on demand
- PC will be more effective if the option of physician-assisted dying is offered
- All possibilities within PC should be explored before offering the option of assistance for ending life

#### Implications for patients
- Non-availability of PC and feeling a burden could pressurise people to end their lives
- Choosing to hasten death by self-starvation and dehydration should be accompanied by PC

### Discussion and Conclusions
- The value of palliative care in eliminating suffering at the end of life is recognised in the declarations, whether or not they support assisted dying/euthanasia.
- Despite divided opinions, ‘palliative care’ forms a significant part of the discussion on legalising assisted dying/euthanasia.
- Declarations against legalising AD/E regard PC as a solution for AD/E requests and offering dignity at the end of life, and those for demand legalising AD/E on the grounds of dignity facilitated by ‘autonomy’ and suffering that cannot be relieved through PC.