



PROFILE

MARIA AVILES

**Nurse, Comprehensive Paediatric Palliative Care Unit
Hospital Universitario Infantil Niño Jesús, Madrid, Spain
SIOPE Nursing Working Group & Palliative Care Working
Group member since 2022**



WORK AND FOCUS

With a Master's in Perinatal and Childhood Care and a PhD, María Avilés brings academic depth to her clinical work. Her team treats children, adolescents, and young adults with all types of tumors—not only those at end-of-life.

Avilés works with the home care team of the Comprehensive Paediatric Palliative Care Unit at Hospital Universitario Infantil Niño Jesús in Madrid, Spain.

“We care for more than 600 patients per year, and around 90 of them are enrolled in the home hospitalization program. We provide 24/7 care covering the entire Autonomous Community of Madrid.”



A DAY IN THE LIFE



Her days begin with an 8:00 AM team meeting to share updates and coordinate care. Regular interdisciplinary meetings ensure adaptability of care throughout the region.

“The on-call team provides updates on patients who required telephone or in-person attention during their shift. On Wednesdays, we have an additional team meeting where we collaborate and discuss patient information from an interdisciplinary perspective. These meetings are essential to ensuring continuity of care and maintaining effective communication among team members.”



A DAY IN THE LIFE

“After our meetings, we review the plan for the day. Although visits are scheduled in advance, we continuously reassess the plan to ensure each patient receives the care they need based on their current condition. Once we have checked that we have all necessary supplies, we begin our visits.”

Visits may include symptom management, emotional support, or urgent care responses. If not on call, Avilés' shift ends at 3:00 PM after a final team meeting to brief the evening on-call staff.



SIOPE INVOLVEMENT

As an active member of the SIOPE Nursing Working Group and Palliative Care Working Group Steering Committee, she contributes to awareness-raising through webinars, research, and educational content.

For me, being part of these two groups is very significant... We are raising awareness of the needs of the childhood cancer community. We are also enhancing and promoting the role of oncology nurses and highlighting the importance of integrating a comprehensive paediatric palliative care team into oncology care from the moment of diagnosis.



WHAT DRIVES HER

“Nurses can make a significant difference in the lives of children, adolescents, young adults with cancer, and their families as part of the interdisciplinary healthcare team. For me, being a paediatric palliative homecare nurse is both challenging and rewarding.”

Avilés envisions a future where joint care models between oncology and palliative teams are standard across Europe, with early integration improving quality of life at every step of the cancer journey.

“I have no doubts that this model would be highly beneficial for the children, adolescents, and young adults we care for. I sincerely hope that joint care becomes a reality in the very near future!”





With a deep commitment to home-based paediatric palliative care, María Avilés brings presence, skill, and humanity to children and families navigating the cancer journey.

This World Health Worker Week, we thank her—and all nurses—who make compassionate care possible every single day.