



Centre for Palliative Care
Education & Research



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Centre for Palliative Care Education and Research Update

The Centre for Palliative Care Education and Research is part of St Vincent's Hospital and affiliated with The University of Melbourne. We have a state wide role in palliative care education and research and aim to enhance the evidence base of clinical practice.



Research initiatives

Family meetings in palliative care

Funded by the Nurses Board of Victoria

The aim of this study was to develop and evaluate multidisciplinary clinical practice guidelines for conducting family meetings. The results showed that family members who attended these meetings reported a reduction in unmet needs. The Guidelines have been published in an international journal and a multimedia resource is being developed.

Group education program for family carers

Funded by Bethlehem Griffiths Research Foundation and DoHA

The aim of this study was to develop and evaluate a group education program for family carers of a relative receiving home based palliative care. The results showed that carers who attended the program were more prepared, felt more competent, had less unmet needs and were able to identify more positive feelings associated with the role. The results have been published in international journals and a multimedia resource for health professionals is currently being developed.

Psychological distress in family carers *Funded by beyondblue: the depression initiative*

This is a longitudinal study of 300 family carers of people receiving palliative care which will provide valuable information about carers' experiences and how to screen for carer distress and prolonged grief. The study follows carers from admission to palliative care through to 13 months post bereavement. The study will also involve developing clinical practice guidelines for better supporting carers.

Patterns of hospitalisation in patients with COPD

Funded by Bethlehem Griffiths Research Foundation

While Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease is very common and has a poor prognosis, patients are frequently not identified as requiring palliative care services. This epidemiological study aims to examine the current care of patients with COPD in the last part of life compared with a cancer population. Location of death and history of hospitalisations will be examined for both groups in the five years prior to death.

The needs of patients with severe COPD

Funded by Bethlehem Griffiths Research Foundation.

This qualitative study aims to examine patient and family perspectives on COPD, end of life care, and bereavement as well as the perspectives of staff working with COPD patients. This information will inform the development of the most appropriate model of palliative care provision for patients with COPD.

Liverpool care pathway project

Funded by Department of Human Services.

The Liverpool Care Pathway for the Dying patient (LCP) was developed in the UK specifically to transfer the hospice model of care into other care settings. This project involves implementing the LCP into St Vincent's Hospital and evaluating the implementation to examine factors which impede and facilitate its adoption.

Evaluation of a hospital based group education session

Funded by the NHMRC

The aim of this study is to develop and evaluate a one off group education session for family carers of palliative care patients in an inpatient setting. Following admission to a palliative care unit, carers of patients are invited to attend a session to help them manage their caring role. The program is being evaluated using a pre-test post-test design across three inpatient services in Australia.

Improving the psychological wellbeing of family carers

Funded by the NHMRC

The study aims to evaluate a home based intervention for family carers of palliative care patients to enhance the psychological wellbeing of family carers. The intervention includes three contacts with a palliative care nurse, written resources, and the development of a care plan (for carers) in partnership with the local palliative care service. The program is being evaluated using a randomised controlled trial across three community services in Australia.

Education initiatives

A palliative care teaching program for junior medical staff

Funded by the Department of Human Services

While most deaths occur in acute hospitals where care is provided by non palliative care specialists, junior doctors in most specialities receive little training in palliative care. This project will aim to address this need through a needs assessment, and the development, implementation and evaluation of an educational resource.

A coordinated palliative medicine training program

Funded by Department of Human Services

This project seeks to redress the lack of specialist palliative care physicians by improving recruitment of specialist trainees and providing a state wide focus on specialist training. It will develop a high quality, coordinated training program with a single point of entry. The proposed model will coordinate specialist palliative medicine training and up-skilling in the palliative approach for generalist doctors.

Specialist Certificate and short courses in palliative care

CPCER has developed a new University accredited graduate training program in Palliative Care through the University of Melbourne. The training is targeted at all health professionals who are required to provide palliative care in their work setting.

Most components of the Specialist Certificate in Palliative Care are also offered as individual short courses for generalist health care professionals and/or those working in specialist palliative care who want to update their skills in a particular area.

Please visit the CPCER website for further information about the Centre's strategic direction, staff, and research and education initiatives. Thank you to all of our clinical partners who have supported the Centre.