

Supporting Oncology Nurses in End-of-Life Care

CareSearch *palliative care knowledge network*

- **A website that enables access to information and resources**
 - For health professionals involved with palliative care as their major role, or as part of their health care role
 - AND for patients, families and community



Welcome to CareSearch. CareSearch is an online resource of palliative care information and evidence. All materials included in this website are reviewed for quality and relevance.

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What is Palliative Care



For Patients and Families



Finding Services



Clinical Practice



Finding Evidence



Education



Research Resources



Professional Groups



About CareSearch

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CareSearch is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing as part of the National Palliative Care Program.

This page was created on 26 May 2008. This website was last updated on 19 November 2010

Palliative Care

- Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problem associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual.

Palliative Care

- Increasing importance of palliative care within the health system
 - Ageing population (dementia)
 - Chronic diseases
 - Co-morbidities
- Over 130,000 people die each year in Australia and half of those are seen to be expected deaths

Online Resources

- The internet should be regarded as an important tool in the suite of evidence-based resources that nurses use (Estabrooks et al 2003)
- It has been shown that over 85% of nurses use a computer for some aspect of their work, with over 49% accessing the internet for clinical use (ANF, 2007)

Estabrooks CA, O'Leary KA, Ricker KL and Humphrey CK (2003) The internet and access to evidence: how are nurses positioned? *Journal Advanced Nursing* 42 (1) 73 -81

Hegney D, Buikstra E, Eley R, Fallon T, Gilmore V and Soar J. Nurses and Information Technology: Final Report. Commonwealth of Australia 2007.

Nurses Hub?

- In recognition that Nurses are the largest group in the health workforce and provide most direct patient and family care, CareSearch looked at how to meet nurses' diverse information needs and to link to the evidence about what is known to be effective
- The CareSearch Nurses Hub was launched in August 2010

What is the Nurses Hub?

- The Nurses Hub is a collection of information, tools and resources developed to form a 'hub' of knowledge
- These pages help to link the specialist and academic evidence base to the information and care needs of those nurses providing practical support to palliative patients in any setting of care

Developing the Hub

- The pages were written (and reviewed) by nurses based on a review of the literature
- They are intended for nurses in any setting, not just specialist palliative care
- Palliative Care Nurses Australia provided formal external peer review on these pages
- Usability testing was performed

What is the Nurses Hub for?

- The information and resources provided within the nurses [HUB] have been developed and/or collated to support nurses in their practice
- They are not intended to provide specific answers to questions, nor will they provide prescriptions or templates for practice
- They are intended to prompt nurses to further explore ideas and concepts and to examine their existing practice

Why you should access the Hub

- You will find palliative care information written for nurses. You don't need to be a palliative care nurse to visit the website, there is relevant information for any nurse in any setting.
- All pages have been written by nurses and reviewed by nurses. They are commented on by two people and then formally peer reviewed. Reviewers are clinicians, academics, researchers working in palliative care.

Why you should access the Hub

- You can print off pages to use for in-service, to put in the tearoom for everyone to read, or to take for education sessions
- A Free Full Text article is available on every page to download and read
- Links are provided to quality-reviewed websites and documents
- It is freely available and can be accessed at any time, day or night

Why online?

- Maintaining currency of knowledge
- Widespread use and application
- Support consumers in an online environment



CareSearch, palliative care knowledge network

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Clinical Practice

- Complement the Clinical Practice Pages
- Issues of relevance to nurses
- Can link to more detailed information if needed

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Ethical Issues

Much of the daily work of nurses in end of life care could perhaps be thought of as overlaid with ethical issues. This may be in relation to concerns that are raised, or with requests or decisions that are made. This section provides information and resources on some of the ethical issues that nurses can encounter in end-of-life care.



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Areas of Practice

- Similar to the Professional Groups section
- Provides information for nurses working with patients in different areas of practice, eg:
 - Oncology
 - Neonates
 - Multicultural areas of practice
 - HIV / AIDS

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HIV / AIDS

For many people in the western world HIV has become more manageable and for some a chronic disease. This has been as a result of access to improved therapeutics. However this access is not equitable. In some countries of lower socio-economic status such as Africa, HIV AIDS has reached epidemic proportions and it is still a life threatening illness.



Review Collection
[HIV/AIDS](#)

Poor or absent public health campaigns in some countries has meant that the rates of HIV / AIDS in for example intravenous drug users and sex workers, are rising at alarming rates.

Nurses will come into contact with those who are managing their HIV and with those who are not. Patients with symptomatic HIV or with AIDS (and who have palliative care needs) can be seen in many different settings and have a range of very different care needs and circumstances.

Resources

- > Palliative Care Australia has conference presentations from the 'Together 2009' national conference, including [HIV AIDS](#)
- > The Victorian Government has generic [health information on HIV AIDS](#).
- > The World Health Organisation has information on [HIV AIDS and Palliative care](#)
- > A Centre for Palliative Care Education (University of Washington, US) [Overview of HIV AIDS palliative care module](#)

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Research

- Nurses will often have an association with research
- They may work in research
- They may look after patients who are involved in research
- Evidence Based Practice information also complements the 'Finding Evidence' section

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Evidence Based Practice

Evidence-based practice is an approach to care that encourages clinicians to use the best available evidence critically applied to the individual patient's circumstances and preferences in clinical practice.

There is a large quantity of information and resources within CareSearch that can help nurses in addressing the issue of evidence based practice.



CareSearch Evidence
[Finding Evidence](#)

Resources

- > The [Joanna Briggs Institute](#) at the University of Adelaide has information and resources that may be of interest
- > The [Australasian Cochrane Centre](#) also has information and resources that may be of interest
- > Penn State University has developed an [Evidence Based Practice Tutorial for Nurses](#)

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Education

- Education is integral to the role of many nurses
- Many nurses provide education to colleagues or to patients
- All nurses need to keep up to date with their own professional development
- This section complements the 'Education' section

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Education

Nurses are engaged with education at many different levels. Many nurses provide education either formally or informally such as in-service. Nurses will also pursue their own education or look to ongoing professional development.

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Journal Club

One way for nurses to remain up-skilled and participate in ongoing learning is through a journal club. These were historically medical led but are often run as a multidisciplinary activity. A journal club is something that nurses can initiate for others as a way of keeping up to date on palliative care issues.



Journal clubs usually comprise a group of individuals with a common interest (eg, palliative care) who meet on a regular basis. At these meetings one of the group presents the findings from a journal article. This responsibility rotates, resulting in a variety of articles of interest being presented.

Finding Evidence
[PubMed Topic Searches](#)
[Appraising Evidence](#)

Resources

- > [How to Develop a Successful Journal Club](#) (Article from the International Transplant Nurses Society but contains useful information)
- > [Palliative Care Journal Club](#) is a website that filters palliative care articles of interest, linking to the abstracts. You can get these emailed to you regularly to keep up to date with what is being published in the field
- > [How to assess a journal article](#) (CNIN information sheet).

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Policy, Quality, Standards

- Information for managers and those who have an interest in quality improvement
- Also find information on public health approaches to palliative care

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Policy and Planning

Some nurses will be working purely in policy and development roles. Others such as nurse managers, will have aspects of this in their broader role. The role of policy is to provide the framework for the direction of care at all levels – national, state and organisational. With implementation of strategic plans in many States and Territories, nurses will often have responsibilities in relation to both regional and service planning.



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- > Palliative Care Australia has key reference documents:
 - [Palliative care service provision in Australia: A planning guide](#)
 - [Guide to Palliative Care Service Development: A population-based approach](#)
- > Palliative Care Australia also has conference presentations from the 'Together 2009' national conference, including [system and service development](#)
- > Victoria's Palliative Care Program has a [Service Delivery Framework and Funding Model Review](#) with resources that may be of interest. They also have [Strengthening Palliative Care Policy 2004 – 2009 Evaluation Report](#)
- > The Australian General Practice Network Rural Palliative Care Resource kit has a section on [Governance and Management](#) and on [Engagement and Partnerships](#)
- > The National Health Service (NHS) in the UK has a website on Improving End-of Life care for Adults. There is information on [Models / Tools of delivery](#) that may be of interest

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Nurses Providing Palliative Care

- Information about palliative care nursing, and about working in specialist palliative care
- Special interest group information complements the 'Professional Connect' section

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Nurses Providing Palliative Care

This section provides information for those currently working as palliative care nurses, or for those who have an interest in working in palliative care.

Within these pages you will find the following:

- > [Palliative Care Nursing](#)
- > [Competencies and Standards for Practice](#)
- > [Working in specialist palliative care](#)
- > [Special interest groups](#)



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Competencies and Standards for Practice

Palliative care as with any other area of specialist care requires a set of core nursing skills. To this end competencies and standards for practice have been developed.



Resources

- > The PCNA website has the [Competency Standards for Specialist Palliative Care Nursing](#) developed by the Centre for Palliative Care Research and Education (Queensland)
- > There is a [National Professional Competency Framework for palliative care nursing in New Zealand](#)
- > The National Health Service (NHS) in the UK has National End-of Life care Strategy, with information on [Common core competences and principles for health and social care workers working with adults at the end of life](#)
- > Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association Nursing Standards Committee. [Nursing standards of practice](#). October 2009.
- > Canadian Nurses Association. [Position statement: Providing nursing care at the end of life](#). 2008

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Australian Generalist Nursing

- > The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council has information on:

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Resources

- Resources can be found here, such as books and links to other websites

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Resources

Within these pages you will find the following:

- > [General Resources](#)
- > [Websites](#)
- > [Books](#)
- > [Journals](#)



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nurses[HUB]news

- Regular 'what's new' updates
- A monthly electronic newsletter
- Nurses views
- Features 6 times a year
 - A nurse in the spotlight
 - A case study/discussion starter
 - Clinical uses
 - Evidence based practice piece

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Nurses News

Stay in touch with what's new in the hub, the nursing community and the CareSearch website. Sign up for the nurses [HUB]news.

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News items from the community and from CareSearch
- [> nurses\[HUB\]news](#)
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Last updated 27 August 2010



CareSearch nurses[HUB]news

May 2011

The nurses[HUB]news keeps you in touch with what's happening. Find out about:

[Nurses in the Spotlight: Michael Collins](#)

[Discussion Starter: Oncology](#)

[Clinical Uses: Oncology](#)

[EBP: Words matter](#)

What's New

[Psychosocial and Bereavement Support of Family](#)

[Caregivers of Palliative Care Patients](#)

The guidelines are a resource for health professionals to improve the psychosocial and bereavement support of family caregivers of palliative care patients.

[Let's chat about dying](#)

Palliative Care Australia has developed resources to encourage conversations about death, dying and planning.

[Guidance for staff responsible for care after death](#)

Something to read

Maida V, Peck J, Ennis M, et al. [Preferences for active and aggressive intervention among patients with advanced cancer](#). BMC Cancer. 2010 Oct 28;10:592.

This cross-sectional study looks at the preferences of patients with advanced cancer for commonly offered active and aggressive therapies such as feeding tubes, CPR, chemotherapy and blood transfusions. Most patients wanted a conservative palliative approach but some groups had different preferences.

Somewhere to visit

[AHRQ Health Care: Innovations Exchange](#)

This website wants to speed the implementation of new and better ways of delivering health care. While not palliative care specific, there are many different evidence-based innovations and tools used in different settings and with diverse populations.



NURSES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

In each issue of the nurses [HUB] news we will feature the views of a nurse working in palliative care or in an associated area. Here Michael Collins talks about his interest in Palliative care and Oncology.

Michael Collins

Nurse Practitioner Candidate works at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre within the ambulatory care rapid response team (RRT).



How I got into Palliative Care in the Acute Oncology setting?

I was fortunate to work in palliative care as a graduate nurse in Warrnambool Base Hospital in 1989 and my interest in palliative care started there. Realizing that I needed to acquire more skills to work effectively in this area I undertook courses in mental health, palliative care and oncology nursing. I later worked as a project nurse in palliative care in Northern Adelaide at Modbury and Lyell McEwen Health Service. Returning to acute oncology in 1996 I worked in various settings including the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre for 4 years. I completed further education including a Masters degree in Nursing Leadership. In 2005 I left Peter Mac to work in community palliative care & hospital based palliative care consultancy. Returning to Peter Mac in 2006 to take up the position as palliative care nurse consultant with a view to becoming a palliative care nurse practitioner. In 2010 I was appointed as nurse practitioner candidate and hope to become endorsed later this year.

Why is Palliative Care important in the acute oncology setting?

The acute oncology setting is where many patients have their first contact with palliative care and it is



CASE STUDY

An urgent referral has been received for **Damien** to provide a secondary consultation for advice on optimal pain management.

Damien is a 22 year old university student who has been diagnosed with Metastatic Melanoma. He has presented with severe sudden onset lumbar back pain. Damien has no significant medical history and is accompanied his mother Pam. Damien reports pain rating 8/10 but pain has been as high as 10/10 and pain is worse on movement.

Damien has had 5 doses of Oxycodone 5mg immediate release with partial response in the past 4 hours. Damien is drowsy but his mother Pam is very distraught following the sudden change in her son's condition.

His staging scans show that Damien has widespread melanoma with bone metastasis at multiple levels of the spine as well as metastasis to lungs, liver, superficial soft tissue and peritoneal cavity. Damien has been reviewed by his medical oncologist who has offered to enroll him in a phase 1 trial which can be started in 2 weeks. The trial has shown increased survival periods for patients with metastatic disease. In order to qualify for the trial the treating team has indicated that there are several prescribing restrictions including that cortico-steroids cannot be prescribed. When speaking with Damien he indicated that he was unaware of metastasis in spine.

On examination Damien is locally tender around L4 vertebrae with associated radicular pain but does not have leg weakness, loss of bowel or bladder function. He is booked for an urgent MRI scan which will occur later that day.

What happens now? (No right or wrong answers here – just food for thought)

- What principles should be considered when assessing the adolescent and young adult patients with pain?



CLINICAL USES: ONCOLOGY

- You have received a referral on Damien, a 22 year old with Metastatic Melanoma. Damien has significant back pain from bony metastases with some nerve pain but no other symptoms, and will potentially be enrolled in a clinical trial, and there are considerations around his medication management.
- Damien is accompanied by his very distressed Mother, and he also has some concerns about his progressive disease.

Within CareSearch there are information and resources that can help to guide clinical care and to help support Damien and his Mother.



In the [Disease-Specific](#) resources section, a link can be found to the Cancer Council Australia website where information can be found on Melanoma.

The research resources section has a page on [resources](#) that include information on Australian Cancer Trials a free information service that displays the latest clinical trials in cancer care.

There are clinical practice pages on [pain](#), that include [assessment tools](#), [opioid analgesics](#), and [Radiotherapy and Adjuvants](#). There are also pages on [supporting carers](#).

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Nurses Views

Nurses from different clinical areas and professional roles share their experiences and views of palliative care nursing in these short videos.

[Nurses Views: Deb Parker](#)

Deb Parker, Director of the University of Queensland/Blue Care Research and Practice Development Centre and Director of the Australian Centre for Evidence Based Community Care talks of her interest in Aged Care Palliative Care.

Posted 18 January 2011

[Nurses Views: John Rosenberg, Chair of PCNA](#)

John Rosenberg, Chair of PCNA, talks about the significant role that nurses play in palliative care, the role of evidence, research and literature in informing palliative care nursing and CareSearch's Nurses Hub as providing access to this material.

Posted 27 August 2010

[Nurses Views: Rural](#)

A nurse speaks of issues faced by those living in rural areas.

Posted 27 August 2010

[Nurses Views: Aged Care](#)

Nurses working in Aged Care speak of issues they face

Posted 27 August 2010

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About the Nurses Hub

The Nurses Hub was launched on 27 August 2010 to co-incide with the Palliative Care Nurses Australia conference. Find out more about:

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- > [Background to the project](#)
- > [Nurses Hub Acknowledgements](#)
- > [Clinical Disclaimer](#)
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CareSearch Nurses Hub

- At any time, nurses working in Oncology may need good quality, current information to help support care of patients at the end of life
- CareSearch provides relevant resources for any nurse in any setting via the nurses hub

CareSearch Nurses Hub

- There for everyone (publically available)
- There when you need it (24 hours a day)
- There at no cost (FREE)
 - Free monthly newsletter
- No need to register

Quality Processes

- All materials on the website are developed and peer reviewed by Australian health professionals to ensure:
 - that they relate to palliative care
 - that they are trustworthy and reflect the best available evidence
 - that, where possible, the evidence relates to rigorous research work

CareSearch would like to thank the many people who contribute their time and expertise to the project including members of the National Advisory Group and the Knowledge Network Management Group.

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www.caresearch.com.au