

CareSearch eNews March 2004

Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the CareSearch eNews. The CareSearch website is designed as a resource for practitioners, educators and researchers working in the palliative field. The website is an outcome of the Evidence Based Practice Project that is being undertaken by Flinders University.



*Dr David Currow,
Chief Investigator
Evidence Based Project*

This project recognised:

- that information and evidence from Australian palliative care was hard to locate
- that not all relevant information and evidence is held on the formal electronic databases
- that information is a vital component of evidence based practice and that good practice includes making information available and
- that opportunities to enhance skills related to searching and evaluating need to be provided to those in the palliative care community.

The Evidence Based Practice Project was responsible for locating and collecting palliative information that is not available through the existing electronic forums from the 1980's when palliative care was emerging as a discipline to the present.

The CareSearch website is a mechanism for users to access this information and evidence to support their clinical practice and their research activities. One of the significant components of this website is a database of Australian palliative literature that can be searched.

This information comes from four main sources:

- Australian conferences;
- Articles from journals that aren't indexed on the major electronic databases;
- Theses and treatises from Australian universities; and
- Reports and documents from other bodies relevant to palliative care.

The importance of these databases rests with the access they provide to the history of palliative care and the palliative care research base in this country. Without such a database, this information is effectively lost from regular use.

New Developments

The website is currently undergoing some modifications to improve its functionality. We have also reorganized the general structure to give some broader categories of information that will enable us to expand the resources available at the site over the next year. New tab keys at the top of the webpage will reflect the new categories.

The new tabs will be:

- Literature Databases;
- Search Strategies in Palliative Care;
- Research;
- Clinical Practice and Service Models; and
- Resources.

Over time new webpages will be added. So, for example, the Resources tab will open to a page that will lead you to Hot Picks, Weblinks, stored articles, newsletter information, forthcoming courses and other material relevant to palliative care practitioners and researchers.

National Reference Group

The development of CareSearch has relied on the knowledge and skills of the National Reference Group. The group is also functioning as the editorial board of the CareSearch website. The current membership of the National Reference Group is: Professor David Currow, Dr Amy Abernethy, Dr Odette Spruyt, Dr Paul Glare, Professor Paddy Phillips, Ms Meryl Horsell, Professor Linda Kristjanson, Associate Professor Carol Grbich, Associate Professor Patsy Yates, Professor Sanchia Aranda, Associate Professor Geoff Mitchell and Ms Rita Evans.

Knowledge Network

The CareSearch website is hosting information on another project investigating a Knowledge Network for palliative care in Australia. This involves developing a conceptual model of a network of resources and materials available through the Internet that would serve the palliative care community. A business plan outlining the resources, partnerships and strategies needed to introduce and support such a network will also be produced. All practitioners, educators and researchers working in the field are invited to participate by completing a needs assessment and providing feedback. Information on the project will be housed at the CareSearch website at www.Caresearch.com.au

This project brings to our attention, developments in information and communication technologies that will shape the way we access information, interact with others in the palliative care community and develop our skills and resources as individuals and organisations.

Both of these projects will be presented at the forthcoming 2nd National Palliative Care Education Conference to be held in Adelaide in May 2004. Those wanting more information or interested in submitting comments or items to this newsletter can email Jennifer.Tieman@rgh.sa.gov.au