



PALLIATIVE CARE RESOURCES FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Providing Palliative Care

Many health professionals are involved in caring for patients who are living with a terminal illness. Some work in specialist palliative care services while others such as general practitioners, social workers or aged care and community nurses care for these patients and their families as part of more general health roles.

Many clinicians will have only limited experience of, and knowledge about, providing care for those who are dying as they only see palliative patients occasionally or intermittently.

Palliative care is a multidisciplinary field of practice. Its knowledge base comes not only from many medical subspecialties, but also from other disciplines such as nursing, psychology and sociology. And, as with other disciplines, the development of evidence-based practice requires access to, and use of, good quality and relevant evidence. However health practitioners and services can face challenges in identifying, managing and using a rapidly expanding evidence and information base. Sometimes, even finding relevant evidence can be difficult.

Evidence for Palliative Care

CareSearch is an online resource that helps clinicians find relevant evidence about palliative care and provides access to trustworthy tools and resources. All material in the website has been checked for quality by Australian health professionals. It has been funded by the Department of Health and Ageing as part of the National Palliative Care Program.

The website is designed for both health professionals and for palliative care patients and their families with different materials for the two groups. The major sections for clinicians are:

- > **Clinical Practice:** Evidence summaries relating to important care topics such as fatigue, dyspnoea and depression. These pages include links to core resources such as guidelines.
- > **Professional Groups:** Provides links to resources and profession-specific palliative care literature. This section includes a set of pages written specifically to support general practitioners in providing care in the community but which will be useful to many other practitioners. A Nurses Hub will be released in late 2010.
- > **Education:** Information on formal courses, conferences, online learning and short courses.
- > **Finding evidence:** Links to databases, literature and guides on finding, appraising and using palliative care evidence.
- > **Finding services:** National and state organisations and services supporting palliative care provision in Australia.
- > **Patient and family pages:** Content and resources that you can recommend to clients or print for them.

What's Now Available

There are other resources especially for clinicians.

- > **PubMed Searches:** 45+ palliative topic searches that can be run immediately in the PubMed database and are automatically updated.
- > **CareSearch Grey Literature:** Database of hard-to find Australian literature comprising conference abstracts, theses, non-indexed journal articles, and organisational and government documents.
- > **Research Data Management System:** Flexible online research survey tool enabling the design and development of data collection forms. Data can be entered onto the system from anywhere in the world. The system is also being used for audit and quality improvement.
- > **Web based learning:** Collection of palliative care presentations and educational activities that can be viewed online.

Using CareSearch

These palliative care resources are publicly available free of charge at www.caresearch.com.au and can be accessed at any time. The resources can be used to seek quick clinical guidance or to update or build your knowledge.