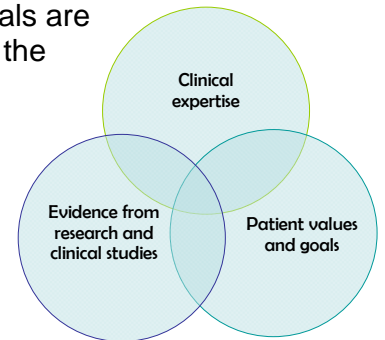


EVIDENCE AND EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE

Evidence has become a very important and widely used term. Professionals are urged to develop evidence based practice to ensure that patients receive the most proven and best quality care. But what is meant by evidence and evidence based practice?

Evidence-based practice looks at integrating the providers' clinical expertise with the best evidence from research and clinical studies and the patient's preferences (Sackett 2000). This approach is used to improve patient outcomes.



So what is meant by evidence? Within evidence based practice, we mean it to be the results of well conducted research studies. Research in palliative care is undertaken by many different groups such as nurses, psychologists and doctors. They use different methodologies and study designs. Research can provide important insights and evidence as to how to best care for palliative care patients and their families.

The National Health and Medical Research Council is Australia's leading authority on research processes. It has developed a hierarchy of evidence that reflects the strength, size of effect and relevance of a study's findings. Systematic reviews and randomised controlled trials are seen as the best evidence of the effectiveness of an intervention such as a new drug or a different way of providing care. They are used in developing clinical guidelines such as the *Guidelines for a Palliative Approach in Residential Aged Care* or the *Clinical practice guidelines for communicating prognosis and end-of-life issues with adults in the advanced stages of a life-limiting illness, and their caregivers*

Finding out more

OTSeeker which is an Australian website has a good power point that describes many aspects of evidence based practice. You can find it at

<http://www.otseeker.com/resources/pdf/Introduction%20to%20EBP.pdf>

Centre for Evidence Based Medicine has an Introduction to evidence based nursing available at

<http://www.cebm.utoronto.ca/syllabi/nur/intro.htm>

CareSearch is an online resource funded by the Department of Health and Ageing to help clinicians find relevant evidence about palliative care. Available now at www.caresearch.com.au