

CareSearch Project
Research Studies Register: Registration Proforma

0028

Study Title: Caring Communities: evaluation of a national palliative care program

Brief description of the study:

The Caring Communities Program was designed to improve the quality of palliative care in the community by assisting families, carers and health service providers to give better support to people who are dying. It included the following six objectives:

- To improve the knowledge and skills of families, carers and community groups so they can better support relatives, loved ones or individuals within the community who are dying, and to support them through their bereavement.
- To enhance community awareness of the role and benefits of palliative care in meeting the needs of people who are dying and their families.
- To improve awareness of a broad range of health care providers to the role of palliative care as an integral part of the health care system and their role in this area.
- To support the educational needs of the specialist palliative care workforce and primary health practitioners and enhance the skills of both groups in working collaboratively across professional boundaries.
- To support the coordination of care for the person who is dying and their family.
- To develop strong partnerships between palliative care service providers, other health service providers and the service system infrastructure to ensure the delivery of palliative care is geographically accessible and integrated across service delivery settings.

Tenders were invited in October 2002 for funding of between \$50,000 and approximately \$200,000 for those organisations with an interest in improving the quality of palliative care in the community. This opportunity stimulated a lot of interest from various organisations and approximately 270 submissions were received nationally. From these applications 37 projects were funded, totalling around \$4.7 million over four years.

These 37 projects address several 'themes' associated with palliative care, including:

- Improving community awareness of palliative care.
- Supporting dying people and their families.
- Increasing awareness of palliative care as an integral part of the health care system.
- Delivering education to support professionals providing palliative care services.
- Creating effective partnerships between palliative care providers, other health service providers and health systems, to coordinate care for dying people.

The CCP Evaluation involved the evaluation of the Caring Communities Program and the 37 different Projects that have been funded within the Program. To facilitate this, the CHSD National Evaluation Team developed an evaluation framework for both the program-level and the project-level evaluations. The evaluation framework operates on three levels:

- Level 1 Impact on, and outcomes for, consumers (patients, families, carers, friends, communities)
- Level 2 Impact on, and outcomes for, providers (professionals, volunteers, organisations)
- Level 3 Impact on, and outcomes for, the system (structures and processes, networks, relationships)

Study Methodology: (Please mark with an x which type of study methodology)

	Epidemiology
X	Health Services / Health Economics / Quality Improvement
X	Qualitative, Observational or Descriptive
X	Mixed Method
	Systematic Review
	Intervention: RCT
	Intervention: Comparative or cohort study
	Intervention: Case series
Project details	
Funding source (Optional): The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing	
Has the study received ethics approval?	X Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/>
Project starting date: May 2003	
Project completion date: August 2006	
Multi site:	X Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/>
RESEARCHERS	
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Associated publications / reports:	
Quinsey K, Williams K, Fildes D, Masso M, Senior K, Yeatman H and Eagar K (2006) <i>Caring Communities: evaluation of a national palliative care program</i>. Centre for Health Service Development, University of Wollongong.	
Topics: Conducting research, philosophy and history of palliative care	