

CareSearch Project
Research Studies Register: Registration Proforma

0060

Study Title: Can the needs of caregivers of patients with advanced cancer be met using a General Practitioner Caregiver Needs Toolkit?

Brief description of the study: During advanced cancer, health professionals and family members focus primarily on the patients' needs. Most wish to die at home, which largely depends on the family caregiver's capacity to manage as the patient approaches death. Caregivers' own needs often receive little attention in the face of overwhelming patient needs. This project will develop and evaluate a General Practitioner (GP) Caregiver Needs Toolkit to enable caregivers' needs to be systematically identified and met in a general practice setting. The Toolkit will include: an evidence based review of caregiver needs, a brief Caregiver Needs Assessment Tool that can be completed by caregivers or with their GP's help to identify their levels of unmet informational, practical, health, relational and spiritual needs and to communicate these to their GP; and a full manual and ready reference of resources to help GPs to develop care plans to meet those needs. These resources are being developed and pilot-tested in Phase 1 to ensure they are suitable and acceptable to GPs and caregivers. In Phase 2, a randomised controlled trial will evaluate the extent to which caregiver needs are better met with the systematic use of the Toolkit compared to current usual care. Evidence-based academic detailing methods will be used to train GPs whose caregiving patients are allocated to receive the intervention. Members of the research team have already developed Palliative Care Needs Assessment Guidelines and a Palliative Care Needs Assessment Tool for health professionals to identify and address patient needs. The GP Caregiver Needs Toolkit will complement these resources and enhance caregivers' access to more timely and needs-based care in the general practice setting. A strategy to disseminate the Toolkit nationally will be devised in Phase 3, if it is shown to improve caregiver outcomes.

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

	Epidemiology
	Health Services / Health Economics / Quality Improvement
	Qualitative, Observational or Descriptive
	Mixed Method
	Systematic Review
X	Intervention: RCT
	Intervention: Comparative or cohort study
	Intervention: Case series

Project details:

Funding source (Optional): NHMRC

Has the study received ethics approval?	X	Yes		No		Not applicable
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Project starting date: 31 03 2008

Project completion date: 30 03 2011

Multi site:	X	Yes		No		Not applicable
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RESEARCHERS

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Investigator E (Name)	Prof David Currow, Associate Investigator
Associated publications / reports:	
Topics (Admin only) Families, Caregivers, Doctors, Cancer	