

CARESEARCH PAGE PROFILE: ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS (CNIN APRIL 2010)

Palliative Care as with many other areas within health has its own 'language'. It doesn't help that much of that language contains acronyms and abbreviations that can be confusing at best and annoying at worst. It is especially difficult for someone who is new to the specialty, when everyone is speaking a common language (albeit in shorthand) that you are not aware of.

The term *acronym* is used to describe any abbreviation formed from letters, such as PCOC (**P**alliative **C**are **O**utcomes **C**ollaborative), while an *abbreviation* refers to any shortened form of a word or a phrase, such as SF-36 (Medical Outcomes Study **S**hort-**F**orm **36**)



Acronyms and abbreviations can be confusing, but using them can mean that you are not communicating effectively if you do not explain what they are. This may be ok when talking generally, but can potentially cause errors for example in prescribing.

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has released information on [National terminology, abbreviations and symbols to be used in the prescribing and administering of Medicines in Australian Hospitals](#)

To help with the confusion in Palliative Care, and as a result of requests from the sector, CareSearch has created a page that helps to explain the terminology and shorthand that is commonly used. The '[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)' page is found within the '[What is Palliative Care?](#)' section.

This list is not exhaustive, so If there are any others that you think could be added here please let CareSearch know.

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