

Project Update

Welcome to the PCC4U project newsletter. Our aim is to promote the uptake of PCC4U resources in all universities which offer medical, nursing and allied health training; extend and develop networks among participating universities; and develop strategies for the ongoing sustainability of the PCC4U project.

If you would like the project team to visit you to introduce PCC4U resources, help you with curriculum mapping, and with the customisation of learning resources in a workshop or personal format, please contact us at mupccp@qut.edu.au.

Project in brief

The PCC4U project is an initiative of the Australian Department of Health and Ageing through the National Palliative Care Program. It aims to promote inclusion of palliative care education as an integral part of all medical, nursing and allied health undergraduate training.

Project Status

The project team welcomes a new addition to our team in Queensland. Jane McEniery has joined the team and is being shared with the PCOC project. Jane is a registered nurse with a nursing career spanning more than 25 years, during which she has worked clinically and professionally in specialist oncology and palliative care settings in Victoria and Queensland. Jane helps manage palliative care projects. She joined the PCC4U project in June 2008.

In September Jane, David and Patsy attended the second biennial Palliative Care Nurses Australia Conference held in Adelaide, South Australia. Many delegates took the opportunity to visit our stand and obtain copies of the educational resources to assist them in their role of providing clinical education support to undergraduate students.

Also in September, Professor Patsy Yates delivered a presentation at the Australia and New Zealand Palliative Medicine (ANZSPM) Conference in Darwin on behalf of the project team. Coinciding with the ANZSPM Conference, Patsy met with academic staff from the Faculty of Education, Health and Sciences and the Teaching and Learning Development Group at Charles Darwin University (CDU) to discuss progress with implementation of palliative care in a range of courses at CDU.

This newsletter provides a summary of discussions held at PCC4U seminars in Sydney and Melbourne in July, an update on project implementation, and a report on course improvement initiatives being implemented at the University of Newcastle and the University of Queensland.

Course Improvement Initiatives

The PCC4U project is supporting a number of improvement initiatives in several courses to promote the integration of palliative care in undergraduate curricula. The initiatives are intended to support the development of graduates to be better equipped to provide palliative care. If you have ideas or plans for how you wish to promote the inclusion of palliative care in your course, please contact our Project Coordinator.

Implementation Update

To date, the PCC4U team has invited all universities which offer undergraduate health courses to participate in the PCC4U project. Interest in the project and its associated resources has been high. The project team has commenced a mid-project review, to obtain a more detailed analysis of the extent to which palliative care is being integrated in undergraduate courses in Australia, and to identify strategies for ensuring the sustainability of PCC4U.

Number of universities	39
Courses	191
Invited	191
Courses implementing	60

Evaluation Update

The project team will soon commence a series of phone interviews with implementation sites as part of this mid-term review. The data obtained from these interviews will be used to:

1. gain a deeper understanding about the strategies and approaches used by implementation sites, and the effectiveness of these in promoting inclusion of palliative care in undergraduate curricula
2. identify the next steps for the individual sites and for the project team to aid implementation
3. identify specific course improvement projects for individual implementation sites
4. develop a more comprehensive database of implementation activities to allow evaluation and reporting on the outcomes of the PCC4U project.

The next Annual Online PCC4U Audit will be conducted during the period November 2008 to February 2009. The core question underpinning the annual evaluation is: What impact has implementation of the PCC4U learning resources had on improving students' capacity to provide a palliative approach to the care of their clients at the end of life?

This core question informs the following questions for this audit:

1. What are the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and attitudes) from inclusion of the PCC4U learning resources in undergraduate curricula?
2. What are the outcomes for academic staff from inclusion of the PCC4U learning resources in undergraduate curricula?
3. To what extent is a palliative approach incorporated into learning experiences for students?
4. How can the PCC4U learning resources be improved?
5. What factors facilitated or impeded the inclusion and endorsement of PCC4U learning resources at individual, organisational and system levels?



PCC4U Workshops

The first of a series of workshops to promote quality teaching and learning in undergraduate palliative care education for academics and clinicians was held on 25 July in Sydney and 28 July in Melbourne.

The **Sydney workshop** was held at the Citigate Central in Haymarket. The workshop was facilitated by Professor Patsy Yates and Associate Professor Robyn Nash. The attendees came from a broad range of clinical and academic fields and key stakeholder groups including Palliative Care Australia, the University of Newcastle, Notre Dame University, University of Technology Sydney, Emmaus Village, Kemps Creek, and Mt Druitt Palliative Care Unit. Major areas/strategies discussed for promoting the quality of teaching and learning in undergraduate palliative care education include:

Integration

- Understanding of palliative care as key threads/dimensions of curriculum
- Need to identify key messages and alternative ways of delivery in various components of the curriculum
- Need for a course team approach
- Importance of engaging course coordinators and other course leaders

Clinical support

- Development of resources to support pre-briefing
- Assisting facilitators to understand and identify 'teachable moments'
- Providing clinical experience opportunities for teachers

Innovative projects

- Support curriculum innovations.

The **Melbourne workshop** was held at the Citigate Melbourne on Flinders Street. The workshop was facilitated by Professor Yates and Associate Professor Nash. The attendees came from a broad range of clinical and academic fields including Monash University Nursing and Physiotherapy, RMIT Nursing, Peter MacCallum Physiotherapy, Alfred Hospital Physiotherapy, CPCRE Nursing, Deakin University Occupational Therapy, and from the Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration (PCOC) project. Major areas/strategies discussed for promoting the quality of teaching and learning in undergraduate palliative care education include:

- How to reflect cultural aspects of palliative care, and respond to diversity in student cohorts
- How to maximise clinical experiences
- How to demonstrate knowledge gained i.e. outcomes – how knowledge is improved? Does the program make a difference? How different ways of teaching make a difference?
- How to promote palliative care as a thread through course curriculum?

Strategies/recommendations for ongoing improvements:

- Need for improved communication between universities and staff in clinical practice
- Need to develop resources to support clinical teachers in palliative care
- The potential to use palliative care to develop skills in interdisciplinary practice
- Continue to develop and improve online resources
- Assistance still required for mapping of palliative care across the curriculum, with support to identify ways to use the resources to achieve desired learning outcomes
- Develop ways to evaluate students' achievement of graduate capabilities
- Promote importance of palliative care at course coordinator and Dean level

PCC4U Course Improvement Initiatives

University of Newcastle –
Pamela Van Der Reit, Victoria Pitt

Currently in the Bachelor of Nursing curriculum, palliative care is evident in 10 per cent of the compulsory program. Although nearly 50 per cent of the compulsory components of this program explore potentially life-limiting diseases, there are no identified palliative care learning outcomes associated with these subjects. The concern of the School is that the presentation of palliative care is mostly related to aged care and, although the components of that course are well developed, the core values of palliative care are not clearly stated in the learning objectives.

Recently, teaching staff have acknowledged the need for further integration of palliative care into the curriculum. A new complementary therapies elective has been approved for implementation but it is imperative that analysis of other courses is undertaken with a view to a more comprehensive integration of palliative care for people with life-limiting illnesses.

Proposal

A proposal to further integrate palliative care into our program would be a three-step process of exploration, identification of resources and implementation/evaluation. First, the exploration of the current curriculum, including course outlines and resources, would be undertaken to determine exactly which core palliative care values and practices are presented. Second, identification of effective teaching and learning resources (material and personnel) and strategies for integrating palliative care into the curriculum would be explored. The third phase would include progressive implementation and evaluation of the palliative care teaching and learning initiatives.



Implementation Site Reports

During 2007–2008 PCC4U resources were implemented into a number of nursing, medical and allied health courses in Australian universities. All sites that implemented the PCC4U teaching and learning resources completed a curriculum mapping exercise and tailored and incorporated selected palliative care undergraduate curriculum resources to fit their existing course structures.

The University of Queensland – Bachelor of Occupational Therapy, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

In the past, palliative care has represented a small part of the teaching curriculum in occupational therapy at the University of Queensland. More recently, teaching staff have acknowledged the importance of educating students in the field of palliative care, and content input in our program has increased over the past 18 months. This increase has been supported by the availability of 'Palliative Care: A learning resource of health care students' developed by the National Palliative Care Program team. While the availability of this program has assisted students in developing a basic understanding of the general field of palliative care, elaborating on this learning has been hindered by the lack of OT-specific resources and case studies.

At this stage, the palliative care content in this program is presented at two stages of the program:

- in first year (a two-hour lecture and one-hour tutorial), and
- in fourth year (as a self-paced learning project).

An additional two-hour lecture and one-hour tutorial in first year address the topic of death and bereavement.

Strategies presently include:

- teaching
- case studies from the Palliative Care program
- a DVD on advanced health directives
- a video titled *Palliative Care: More than just pain control*, reflective exercises, and a magazine clipping to stimulate discussion.

Knowledge of the palliative care field is assessed to a minor degree in the current course structure. There is presently a curriculum review under way, and the process of teaching palliative care may change after 2010 in response to this review.

The level of clinical experience gained by students in the field of palliative care depends on their allocated fieldwork experiences, which are dependent on the placements offered by clinicians in the field. Some students will gain no clinical experience, while others might complete a seven- or ten-week placement in the area; still others will encounter palliative care within their broader hospital or community fieldwork experience.

Currently, the PCC4U learning resources are used in a customised format as video for lectures/tutorials, and in an online format using Blackboard for fourth-year students. The PCC4U website is also promoted to students, including access to the online package, for possible use in future situations where the information may prove valuable.

The strengths of the PCC4U resources for use by the Division of Occupational Therapy include:

- the reflection points
- the use of an Occupational Therapist (OT) in the vignettes, and
- the clear definitions and descriptions.

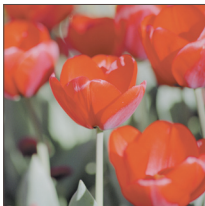
In the future there will be a need to create discipline-specific resources. With this in mind the Occupational Therapy school received funding from the PCC4U project to develop additional, tailored resources. The funding enabled three research assistants to be employed to conduct two surveys of: (a) OT schools, and (b) palliative care clinicians. The purpose of the surveys was to identify and collate the resources used to teach

palliative care and to obtain suggestions about what new teaching material might be valuable to them. Based on this information, the school has now developed a problem-based learning resource that incorporates four detailed case studies (one paediatric and three adult), video interviews with local OT clinicians, and PowerPoint presentations for academics. One of these presentations provides a range of ideas to support tutorial activities.

These resources will be employed in a range of teaching situations including instructional and problem-based learning approaches (e.g. asking students to develop a comprehensive OT care plan in palliative care, team problem solving). There will also be the opportunity to provide an interprofessional education component where students are required to consider the roles of multiple professionals in the field, or to work in a multidisciplinary student team to determine a comprehensive care plan.

As part of the networking and palliative care community being engendered through the PCC4U project, these resources will also be shared with other university OT schools across the country and in New Zealand.

For further information about the materials developed, please contact Dr Pamela Meredith at p.meredith@uq.edu.au.



Where to from here?

Project Activities

- Promote ongoing networks and partnerships in undergraduate palliative care education
- Prepare teaching and learning workshops for 2008
- Conduct 2008 site visits
- Update and extend the range of available resources

Four core graduate capabilities

Four graduate capabilities have been identified as being essential for health professionals to provide a palliative approach to care for persons with a life-limiting illness:

1. Effective communication in the context of an individual's responses to loss and grief, existential challenges, uncertainty and changing goals of care
2. Appreciation of and respect for the diverse human and clinical responses of each individual throughout their illness trajectory
3. Understanding of principles for assessment and management of clinical and supportive care needs
4. The capacity for reflection and self-evaluation of one's professional and personal experiences and their cumulative impact on the self and others

If you are interested in obtaining further information about the project, please feel welcome to visit our web site at www.pcc4u.Org or contact a member of the project team by email mupccp@qut.edu.au