



Tools to help physios in palliative care

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The National Palliative Care Strategy 2018 highlights the importance of evidence and a person-centred approach as essential ingredients of quality palliative care. A guiding principle of the national strategy is that people receiving and providing palliative care have access to trustworthy resources to help them make informed decisions about care.

People living with a life-limiting illness, their family and carers face multiple choices relating to their care. Physiotherapists make decisions relating to when and how to continue or modify care, and in the choice of advice and educational materials they share with clients and families. Physiotherapists draw on the best available research evidence along with clinical expertise, the patient's values and circumstances, and the clinical context. Pulling these elements together is the skill of clinical reasoning.

Current best evidence is the foundation of effective, efficient and safe care (Dizon et al 2012, Hoffmann et al 2013) yet finding the best evidence can be time-consuming. CareSearch and palliAGED address this by enabling rapid access to palliative care evidence and evidence summaries.

The CareSearch systematic review collection collates the currently available high-level literature, providing an easy way to find reviews on topics relevant to palliative care. The clinical evidence pages within CareSearch and palliAGED summarise the current best evidence to provide an understanding of topics including advance care planning, symptom management and carer support. Content is appraised for quality and relevance to the Australian setting.

Appraising evidence quality means looking at the soundness of the design and methodology, reported outcomes and the applicability or generalisability of findings. This requires skill and time. In writing content, CareSearch and palliAGED page authors appraise the literature using validated appraisal tools. As sections are built or refreshed, healthcare experts also review the content to ensure that it resonates with clinical practice in the Australian context.

CareSearch and palliAGED inform the user whether the evidence is solid, trustworthy and clinically important, and highlight areas of controversy and research gaps.

Susan Gravier trained as a physiotherapist and is now a researcher in palliative care. She coordinated the production of palliAGED and is leading the allied health component of the CareSearch and palliAGED [Engagement Project](#) .

Resources

CareSearch is an online source for evidence on palliative care and includes the systematic review collection and clinical evidence pages: www.caresearch.com.au

palliAGED is the palliative care evidence and practice resource for aged care: www.palliaged.com.au.

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