Massive Online Open Courses as a way of engaging rural health professionals & communities in open discussions about death & dying.

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CareSearch:
- Free website providing easy access to evidence-based information on palliative care.
- Has sections for Allied Health, Nurses, GPs, Indigenous care, & for consumers.
- PROBLEM: dying & palliative care are the ‘elephant in the room’. SOLUTION?...

MOOCs:
- Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) - new technology with potential to reach people throughout Australia & worldwide.
- MOOCs = freely available short online courses; flexible learning via internet.
- Innovative technology for educational interaction, networking & knowledge exchange.
- CareSearch harnessed this opportunity by developing a MOOC, Dying2Learn.
- Aimed to facilitate social discussion about death, dying & palliative care Australia-wide, & build community death awareness.
Methods:
• Designed on OpenLearning platform & made freely available to the public.
• 5-week course including educational content, reflection activities & peer interaction.
• Collected demographic information at enrolment.
• Pre- & post- assessment of death attitudes.
• General evaluation & MOOC engagement metrics extracted from platform.
• Mixed-methods data analysis.

Results:
• Participants: 4718 people enrolled in Dying2Learn in last 3 years; 50,000 comments
• 2017 cohort = 1960 enrolees (majority Australian)
  ➢ 38% living in regional or remote Australia
  ➢ 73% were health professionals (19% in Allied Health)
  ➢ Similar levels of course progress across groups.
“The course gave me exactly what I needed – a greater inner awareness and increased confidence to talk more openly about death and dying.”

97% OF OUR PARTICIPANTS enjoyed Dying2Learn

“I am a grief counsellor living in a remote part of Australia. I have always felt very much alone and without any support. This MOOC has made me feel part of a community (a great feeling) and given me so many resources to refer to… a wonderful and empowering learning experience”

96% OF OUR PARTICIPANTS felt comfortable talking about dying and death by the end of Dying2Learn
• A MOOC was a viable strategy for stimulating community discussion about death.
• Dying2Learn MOOC platform was:
  ➢ well-utilised by health professionals & community members in rural Australia
  ➢ helped participants feel more comfortable discussing death.
• Highlights the potential of these innovative online learning platforms for:
  ➢ increasing community awareness of death, dying & palliative care
  ➢ health professional education & CPD opportunities, particularly for health professionals living in rural areas.

“Discussing death and dying without offending anyone was liberating and has prompted me to get all my ducks in a row.”

Miller-Lewis et al. (2018); Rawlings et al. (2017); Tieman et al. (2018).