



Perspectives of academic and clinical educators, and project staff on evidence-based resources

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The University acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which its campuses are located, these are the Traditional Lands of the Arrernte, Dagoman, First Nations of the South East, First Peoples of the River Murray & Mallee region, Jawoyn, Kurna, Larrakia, Ngadjuri, Ngarrindjeri, Ramindjeri, Warumungu, Wardaman and Yolngu people.

We honour their Elders past, present and emerging.



Evidence-based resources are vital for developing workforce knowledge and informing practice in palliative and end-of-life care.

The CareSearch project produces Clinical Evidence Summaries for the palliative care sector in Australia. Based on systematic reviews, formally appraised and collated to summarise the best available evidence relevant to palliative care professional and clinical practice topics.

Understanding the experiences of educators will help improve access to evidence-based training resources, therefore building workforce capability and ensuring high-quality care for palliative patients.

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Study Overview

Aims:

- a) understand how palliative care clinical and academic educators value and use clinical evidence in education resources and teaching practice, and
- b) to elicit their attitudes and experiences of using CareSearch Clinical Evidence Summaries in their teaching curriculum

Methods:

National surveys of academic educators (n=18) and National Palliative Care Project (NPCP) personnel (n=29)

Semi-structured interviews with 15 specialist palliative care educators.

Ethics approval was granted by the Flinders University Human Research Ethics Committee (HEL8391-2) on 29 May 2025



Survey findings: Academic Educators

18/39 respondents from university and TAFE educators in palliative care, nursing or health

100% saw evidence as important or very important.

94% included palliative care in their teaching and 88% included palliative care evidence

10/18 respondents included Clinical Evidence Summaries in their teaching

(Evidence)...enables the nurse to 'arm up' for those very difficult conversations ...

More likely to refer to specialist PC services... helps set up support mechanisms.

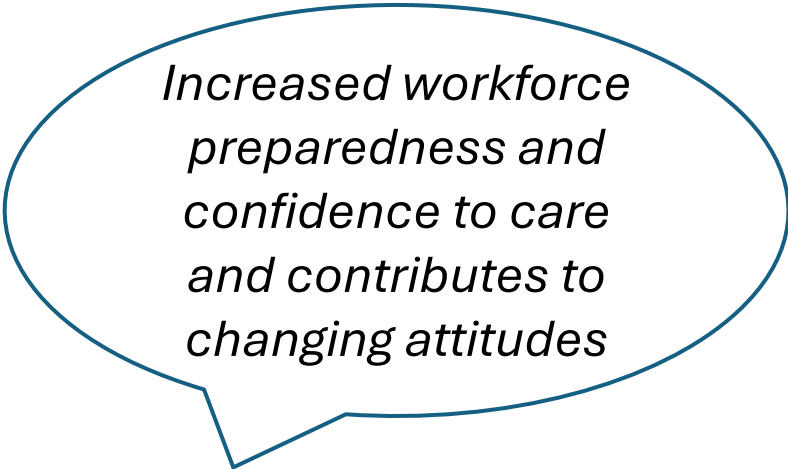
Survey Findings – NPCP Staff

29 respondents from 10 projects.

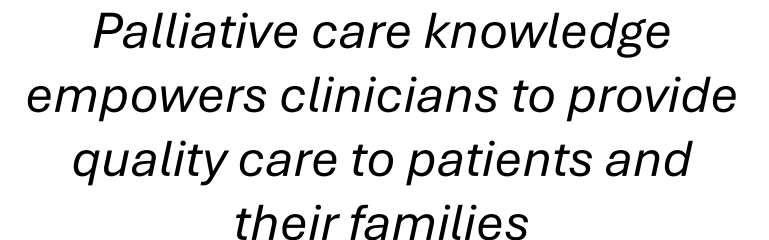
Strong commitment to evidence-based project content all indicating that they incorporate research evidence into their project's resources and training. But variable reports on types of evidence used within projects

Positive attitudes on the impacts of evidence

Mixed awareness of CareSearch evidence resources



Increased workforce preparedness and confidence to care and contributes to changing attitudes



Palliative care knowledge empowers clinicians to provide quality care to patients and their families

Interview Findings: Palliative Care Educators

15 educators providing palliative care to post registration practising health professionals

Three key themes identified:

- Theme 1 highlighted the centrality of evidence in specialist palliative care evidence with evidence being seen as both an essential catalyst and a nuanced evolving influence.
- Theme 2 identified evidence challenges in clinical practice and education
- Theme 3 addressed the role and value of CareSearch and of the Clinical Evidence Summaries

Theme 1: Centrality of Evidence

Participants described the role of evidence in palliative care as both an essential catalyst for improving practice and as a nuanced, evolving influence.

Evidence was also linked to a shared desire to avoid harm and ensure care is grounded in sound methodology.

There is also a strong preference for resources that are practical, easily accessible, and provide concise, clinically informed summaries to support real-world decision-making.

It's shaping what we do in a way. It's a dialogue that's sort of ongoing all the time really'.

It's vitally important that senior staff and managers... understand that there is evidence to support particular actions.

None of us want to practice witchcraft or do things that might cause harm...

Theme 2: Key Challenges faced by educators

Interviewees highlighted a range of challenges with the palliative care evidence base and its use, including availability, accessibility, and currency.

Barriers exist- paywalls, delays in access, limited institutional subscriptions, and difficulty navigating online platforms, especially when time is constrained.

Communication as the most challenging aspect of palliative care for new graduates.

We need evidence that's current and synthesised; otherwise, people just keep using what they've always used.

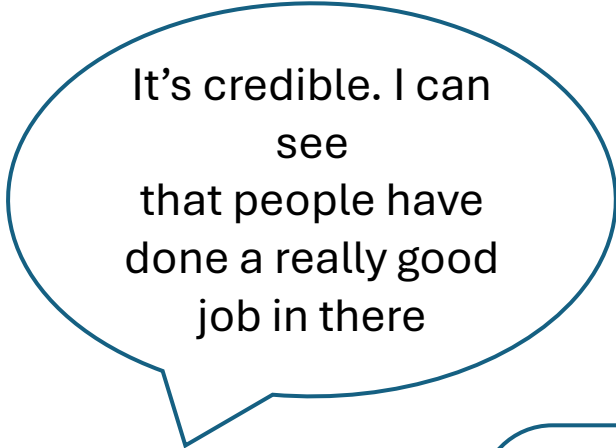
They just don't know how to bring up... I mean, how do you tell someone their loved one is dying?

It's really hard for me to go somewhere and find that evidence. I don't know where to look

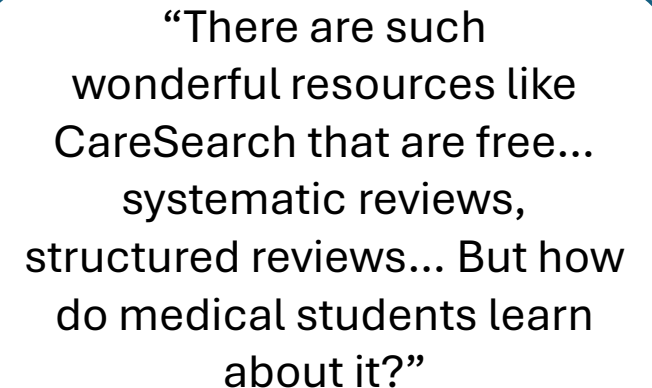
Theme 3: Role and value of CareSearch

Interviewees were keen to express their views on CareSearch more generally. They consistently described CareSearch as a valued and credible resource that supports both clinical practice and education in palliative care.

The Clinical Evidence Summaries were recognised for their clarity, accessibility, and practical utility, helping educators and clinicians quickly access synthesised, trustworthy information.



It's credible. I can see that people have done a really good job in there



“There are such wonderful resources like CareSearch that are free... systematic reviews, structured reviews... But how do medical students learn about it?”

Implications for CareSearch

Articulating evidence: Distinguishing purpose of evidence in the knowledge and practice cycle

Awareness and visibility: Not all educators and clinicians are familiar with CareSearch or its full suite of offerings, limiting its reach and uptake.

Foundational relevance and depth: While valued as a foundational resource, specialist or advanced practitioners may need greater depth or more tailored content for complex clinical scenarios.

Integration into education: Opportunities exist to further embed CareSearch resources into curricula, learning resources, professional networks, and ongoing workforce development.

Project Interfaces: Better exchange between NPCP projects could improve efficiency, prevent duplication, and support sector outcomes.



Clinical Evidence Summaries



For further information on the Clinical Evidence Summaries or CareSearch resources, email caresearch@flinders.edu.au



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