

palliAGED: Quality guidance for quality palliative care in aged care

Best practice guidance and evidence are crucial in supporting our aged care workforce and health professionals to deliver quality palliative care for Australia's increasing older population. As we mark our 2nd year, we at palliAGED commit to working with the aged care industry and ensuring that evidence and practical guidance is available for the whole workforce involved in caring for older Australians.

Australia has a growing older population [1] who are living longer and predicted to have higher care needs as they age. [2] With this, health professionals and aged care services share the huge task of supporting older people to live until they die in an atmosphere of care and timely support - whether at home, community or residential facility.

Aged care services need to provide clinical care and personal care that addresses the needs of each individual resident or client. As an older person approaches the end of life, there can be specific needs and preferences for care and support.

The new Aged Care Quality Standards which all aged care providers will be assessed against starting 1 July 2019 put the person at the centre of care and quality [3] and reflect the need for an informed and capable workforce. Particularly, Standard 3 (Personal and Clinical Care) highlights the role of best practice guidance and available evidence in planning and delivering tailored care that optimises health and wellbeing. [4] There is thus a continuing need to ensure that best practice guidance and evidence-based resources are available to our health professionals and aged care workforce. This can be challenging when recognising and managing planning and support needs associated with the end of life and speaks to the need.

Australia has led the world in providing evidence-based support for palliative care in aged care. The Palliative Approach in Residential Aged Care (APRAC) and Palliative Approach for Aged Care in the Community (COMPAC) Guidelines were the first to acknowledge, compile,

and promote the availability and importance of evidence that could guide and support palliative care for older people. In 2017, these guidelines were integrated and updated into what is now palliAGED. [5]

Since its launch, palliAGED has been working to help improve the quality of aged care services provided to Australians. We do this by providing best practice guidance and evidence for our aged care workforce, particularly GPs, nurses, allied health professionals, personal care assistants and managers. The process (169kb pdf) by which our evidenced-based resources are developed involves extensive searching, assessment of the quality of the research, data extraction, peer review and review by experts and intended users. This continues our country's leadership in developing evidence-based guidance in this area.

There is still a lot of work to be done to ensure that every older Australian and their families get the quality, person-centred palliative care that we are all aiming for. Best practice guidance and evidence are only one part of improving the quality of care, albeit an important one. And as we mark our 2nd year, we at palliAGED commit to working with the aged care industry and ensuring that evidence and practical guidance is available for the whole workforce involved in caring for older Australians.



(Low Vision Version - 14kb word doc)

The New Aged Care Standards emphasises the delivery of tailored personal and clinical care that is based on relevant guidance and available evidence.

Aged Care Quality Standard 3 Personal and Clinical Care Infographic (1.74MB pdf)



Read Blog: Why quality in palliative care guidance for aged care matters



(Low Vision Version - 15kb word doc)

palliAGED offers best practice guidance and evidence-based resources to support health professionals and the aged care workforce.

palliAGED Resource Summary (207kb jpeg)

References

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Older Australia at a Glance: Demographics of older Australians [Internet]. 2018 [updated 2018 Sep 10; cited 2019 May 21]; AIHW cat. no. AGE 87.
2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). Older Australians at a glance: Life expectancy [Internet]. 2018 [updated 2018 Sep 10; cited 2019 May 21]; AIHW cat. no. AGE 87.
3. Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC). Transitioning to the new Aged Care Quality Standards [Internet]. 2019 [updated 2019 May 15; cited 2019 May 21].
4. Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC). Guidance and Resources for Providers to support the Aged Care Quality Standards. Canberra: ACQSC; 2018
5. palliAGED. About palliAGED [Internet]. 2020 [cited 2020 Nov 24].