

SA Palliative Care Community Pharmacy Update

A joint initiative of South Australian Palliative Care Services

Community pharmacists can lead deprescribing conversations with their patients and support GPs ([Part 1 - Oct 2018 \(306kb pdf\)](#))

An example dialog with Mrs Bull during her MedsCheck

Hi Mrs Bull, I'm glad we have the time today to talk about what's important to you. Do you want to talk about your health today?

Yes, thank you

I'm happy to give you as much information as I can based on what I know and what you want to know

Well, I've had new tablets added since I was in hospital, I think for my pain and this nausea. I'm not sure what it all means, they've changed my chemo too.

What's your understanding of your health situation?

Well I didn't like being in hospital. They said my cancer has spread. I suppose that's why I felt so ill and my hip pain is getting worse.

Yes I can understand being in hospital is hard on you
(pause)

I'm sorry to hear that things are changing and you've got more pain and this nausea
(pause)

What's important to you? What would you like me as part of your health care team to be focusing on?

I just want to feel better. Not go to hospital. Enjoy the time I've got with family and friends really. Eating and playing with the little ones.

Well I'll try my best to make your medicines keep you comfortable. We might be able to reduce the number of tablets you take.

Ok, well, just give me the ones that are good for me. But I've always been told to take my tablets every day.

As the cancer spreads, your body can struggle to keep up with the changes. Your medicines might not work as well as they used to or even become harmful to you.

(pause)

I'm happy to talk to you about this now and at any other time too. I'll be here to support you and Mr Bull as he cares for you.

This is only one example of how the conversation could be managed. There is no perfect way to have this conversation, but practice will help develop pharmacist's communication skills and confidence.

The next Community Pharmacy Update will rationalise her medications and create a plan for deprescribing.

Some resources include:

- > [Best possible Medication History](#)
- > [Communicating with patients about prognosis and end of life issues](#)
- > [Program of Experience in the Palliative Approach](#) (Professional placements)

For more information

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This update is intended to provide practical up to date and factual information relating to pharmacy and medicines management in the setting of Palliative Care and is based on critical review of available evidence. Individual patient circumstances must be considered when applying this information. Please feel free to distribute this update further to interested colleagues.

