

An initiative to develop the Paediatric Palliative Medical Workforce within Australia

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Background

There is a need to develop the paediatric medical workforce to care for children with life limiting conditions throughout Australia.

Objectives

One of the objectives of the QuoCCA (Quality of Care Collaborative of Australia) project was to further develop the medical workforce within Australia by training more paediatricians to develop expertise in the provision of paediatric palliative care.

Methods

Training was undertaken through the placements at three hospitals (Queensland Children's Hospital; Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick; and John Hunter Children's Hospital, Newcastle). Evaluation of the trainees' acquisition of knowledge, confidence and skills was undertaken after completing their training through an online survey, and discovery interviews.

Results

Twenty-three (23) paediatric medical trainees have undertaken training in paediatric palliative care from mid-2015 to the present. Trainees have subsequently worked in a number of paediatric specialties (paediatric palliative care, paediatric oncology, general paediatrics, other paediatric specialties, emergency medicine, and pain medicine). Trainees felt they were assisted in developing capability in the palliative approach, early referral, advance care planning and assessment (see Table 1). Areas where training could be further developed included bereavement care, self care and service improvement activities. Trainees were also able to participate in quality and educational activities of benefit to other health professionals within the hospital (e.g. junior medical staff teaching, mortality and morbidity meetings, and conference presentations).

Conclusion

The addition of training places in paediatric palliative care for paediatric medical fellows has developed the medical workforce, increased capability of the participants, increased educational activity of the services, and allowed opportunities for increased integration of palliative care into children's hospitals and hospices. The program has also fostered interest of paediatric trainees who wanted to pursue paediatric palliative care as a career path, or have PPC as a special interest within their career.

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Discovery Interview

"But I think there's a lot to be said for going out to the family and meeting them and the space that they're at, when that's their wish, not only for when you just meet them but, yeah, end of life care, then of course that's a very – I don't know, very challenging but I guess – if being at home is what's important to the family, I think that's meaningful to be able to support them there."



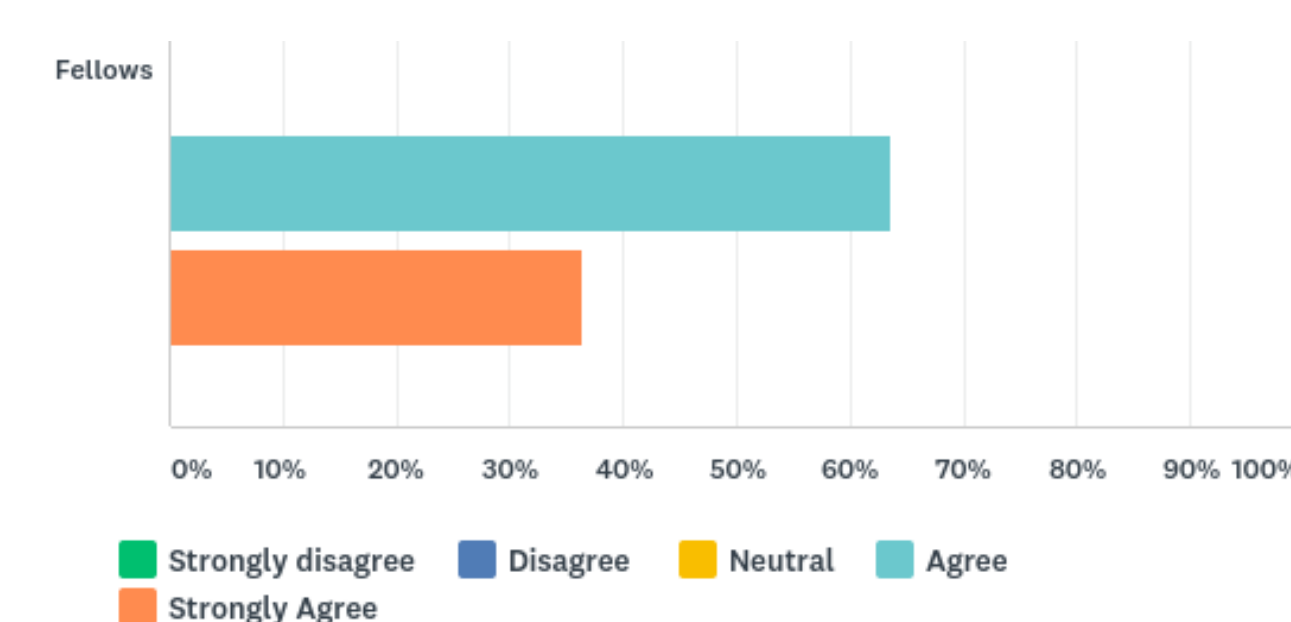
Table 1- Online Survey (n=11)

Improvement in knowledge, skills or confidence

	Not at all Helpful		A Little Helpful		Mod Helpful		Very Helpful		Extremely Helpful		NA	
Palliative Approach	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	36%	7	64%	0	0%
Early Referral	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	36%	7	64%	0	0%
Advance care planning	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	45%	6	55%	0	0%
Assessment	0	0%	0	0%	1	9%	4	36%	6	55%	0	0%
Accessing Resources	0	0%	0	0%	1	9%	5	45%	5	45%	0	0%
Physical Symptoms	0	0%	0	0%	1	9%	7	64%	3	27%	0	0%
Psychosocial Needs	0	0%	0	0%	1	9%	5	45%	5	45%	0	0%
Spiritual Care	0	0%	0	0%	3	27%	5	45%	3	27%	0	0%
Communication Skills	0	0%	0	0%	4	36%	2	18%	5	45%	0	0%
End of Life Care	0	0%	0	0%	2	18%	5	45%	4	36%	0	0%
Bereavement Care	0	0%	1	9%	4	36%	4	36%	1	9%	1	9%
Self care, Support for HCP	0	0%	1	9%	3	27%	6	55%	1	9%	0	0%
Service Improvement	0	0%	1	9%	3	27%	6	55%	0	0%	1	9%
Working in a Team	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6	60%	4	40%	0	0%

Confidence

Managing patient with life-limiting illness



Teaching Other Doctors and Health Professionals

