

New Approaches to Connecting the Aged Care Sector with Palliative Care Information

Erny-Albrecht K¹, Bonnin R¹, Tieman J¹, & Lewis V²

1. CareSearch, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia

2. School of Nursing and Midwifery, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia

Introduction

The aged care sector attends to the needs of some of our most vulnerable community members. Many older Australians approach the end of their life with one or more complex life-limiting chronic conditions such as dementia and advanced heart failure. Supporting person-centred palliative care has become part of core business within the aged care sector, a transition requiring additional education and training. For ten years CareSearch has been developing and providing online access to evidence based resources in palliative care.

In 2017 we launched palliAGED to provide evidence based support in palliative care specific to the needs of older people and the aged care sector.

palliAGED has an important role in supporting everyone to take on the required skills and understanding to make informed decisions in palliative care for older Australians. However, we also recognise that providing access to information is often of itself not enough.

To address this, a framework was developed to guide engagement with individual sectors to help us understand which information channels are preferred by each group, in what format information should be provided, and what kind of information is required with respect to palliative care. In 2018 we held a workshop with members of the aged care sector and, guided by the framework, launched the Engagement Project in aged care. Here we present our findings and discuss how this has shaped subsequent activities to better connect the aged care sector with evidence based palliative care information that is relevant to their needs and those of the people approaching death who they support.

Methods

As part of the formal engagement framework a literature scan of refereed and grey literature was conducted to help us understand the context in which the aged care sector operates. This informed approaches to motivating people to participate in the project to talk about the specific issues affecting awareness and use of resources.

Our analysis of the context informed workshops with members of the aged care sector. The aim of workshops was to support free discussions to determine:

- how information enters the aged care sector,
- how it is disseminated,
- how important is the role of evidence, and
- how information should be presented.



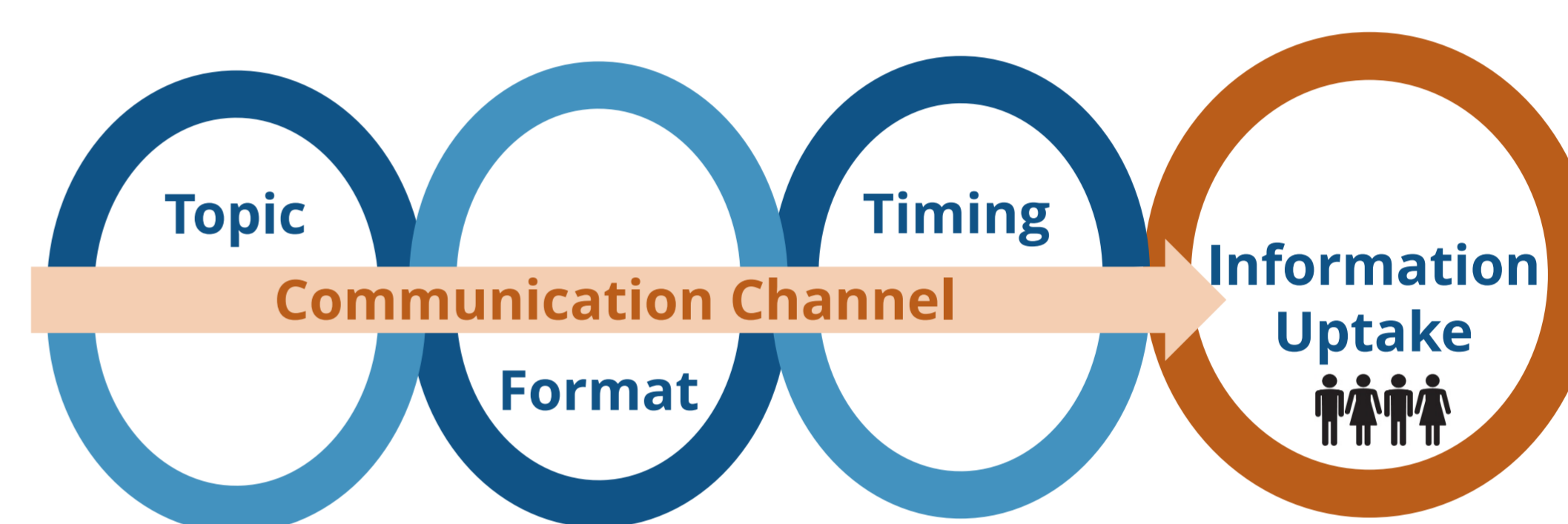
Results & Discussion

Using a formal Engagement Framework we have:

- developed a context statement for aged care,
- recruited “exemplar” participants for workshops to provide representative perspectives on value and use of evidence in their context,
- co-developed an Action Plan for the sector with the sector,
- implemented the Action Plan by engaging with multiple channels,
- assessed the impact of the Action Plan, and
- engaged with the sector to further refine ongoing approaches.

Results & Discussion (continued)

Information enters the aged care sector through several channels. However, for all channels there needs to be alignment between topic, format and timing to ensure uptake. Understanding the sector including current and emerging influences is essential and is best supported through working with the sector to develop material for the sector.



Key messages from the aged care sector about the role of evidence included:

- Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) is a new focus but growing in importance
- Evidence needs a practical focus – what to do, how to do it based on evidence
- Aged care workers need to know why evidence matters and why it makes a difference
- Aged care workers need to know how evidence informs everyday practice.

Conclusions

To improve our understanding of the use of evidence a structured approach to engagement with the aged care sector was developed and implemented. In this way increased awareness and reach of evidence based information was achieved. However, the dynamic nature of information needs and need to build capacity in EBP requires ongoing and close engagement with the sector.

Finding out more

Visit the Engagement Project webpage: <https://www.caresearch.com.au/EngagementProject>

Email: katrina.ernyalbrecht@flinders.edu.au

