



Building a Residential Aged Care Facilities Hub

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Introduction

Residential Aged Care (RAC) in Australia provides care and support to many older Australians at the end of life. In 2009-2010, there were almost 50,000 deaths of aged care residents [1]. The majority of these deaths were due to dementia, frailty or organ failure.

As the population ages, RAC will have an increasingly important role in providing care to vulnerable older Australians. Their role has been identified within the Government's "Living Longer, Living Better" reform package [2]. However, RAC contends with a number of serious challenges such as resourcing, an aging workforce and a shortage of skilled workers.

Why a Hub?

CareSearch is a free, online source of quality, evidence based information on palliative care for health professionals, patients and families. The role of aged care providers in palliative care has been acknowledged in the National Palliative Care Strategy 2012 [3].

As part of its current program of work, CareSearch is developing a RAC Hub.

Knowledge hubs are discrete sets of content and resources designed to meet the information needs of a particular group or to accumulate the content base around a particular issue or care topic [4]. Resources reflect the specific context or requirements of the particular group enabling easy and rapid use.

The RAC Hub builds on the success of the CareSearch's Nurses Hub and GP hub in providing a suite of pages on palliative care for a specialty area.

This Hub will provide staff in aged care with access to palliative care information and resources and in doing so support the care of older Australians.

Who is developing the Hub?

The CareSearch project team has been responsible for reviewing the literature and identifying resources for inclusion in the RAC Hub.

The development of the RAC Hub has been supported by a working group of aged care health practitioners and academics. They have guided content development and reviewed the work at every stage and commented on design elements and marketing strategies.

The pages for the RAC Hub will be externally reviewed by experts from RAC.



What will be in the RAC Hub?

RAC is a diverse sector where care is provided by a team of people with different skill sets. The Hub content will help managers, nurses, personal care workers, and pastoral care and allied health staff to access evidence-based information on palliative care. The importance of the resident's family is also recognised.



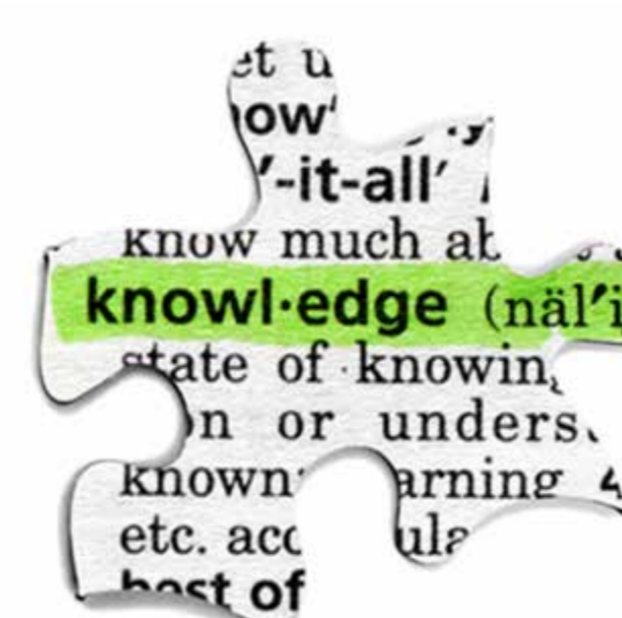
This work has been undertaken to assist facilities in ensuring that older Australians who are approaching the end of their life can receive best practice care in the place they regard as home, and that their families can access quality information about this important area of care.

The RAC Hub will not duplicate information already on CareSearch, there will be links to relevant resources already contained in the CareSearch website.

The content of this Hub will be grouped into web pages under the following headings:

- People working in RAC;
- Care Issues;
- Facility and Quality Issues;
- Recognising Resident's Concerns;
- Communication;
- For Residents and Families; and
- Resources and Tools.

The Hub will be supported by a Residential Aged Care Search Filter and specific topic searches which will run in the PubMed database.



A second working group has helped with the development of the RAC Search Filter making sure that the content it retrieves is relevant to the sector.

The RAC Hub will be launched in October 2012 as a prelude to World Hospice and Palliative Care Day which will be held on Saturday 13 October 2012. World Hospice Day recognises the role of hospice and palliative care in providing care for people at the end of life. The theme for 2012 is *Living to the end – Palliative care for an ageing population*.

Recognising the specific palliative care needs of older people, and particularly the needs of those whose place of residence is an aged care facility, is essential if we are to be able to provide appropriate end of life care and enable people to have the best quality of life until death.

How to Get Involved

A RAC newsletter has been published monthly to keep those working in aged care facilities informed about the progress of the Hub, and to seek their views on content and issues. You can sign up to receive this free newsletter by emailing caresearch@flinders.edu.au. Many of those who have registered for the newsletter have supported the project by reviewing pages or contributing ideas for content.

Health professionals, aged care facilities and palliative care services can help by:

- Including information on the RAC Hub in their newsletters
- Forwarding on emails and encouraging staff to register for the RAC newsletter
- Registering to receive a launch pack on the RAC Hub by emailing caresearch@flinders.edu.au.

The RAC Hub has been written by aged care nurses and reviewed by health care professionals with aged care expertise to support all those providing palliative care in RAC.



Conclusion

The Residential Aged Care Hub is an exciting development that will assist aged care staff to provide quality end of life care. It will also be of value to the wider palliative care community with information on RAC and issues that affect palliative care delivery in this setting.

The RAC will be free to use and available when it is needed at www.caresearch.com.au.

References

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2011. Residential aged care in Australia 2009-10: a statistical overview. Aged care statistics series no. 35. Cat. no. AGE 66. Canberra: AIHW.
2. Living Longer Living Better Commonwealth of Australia 2012
3. The National Palliative Care Strategy – Supporting Australians to Live Well at the End of Life Commonwealth of Australia 2010
4. Tieman JJ Filters and hubs: shortening the distance to palliative care evidence Australian Journal of Primary Health Online published Nov 2011 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1071/PY11103>

