

EVALUATION OF THE CARESEARCH GP WEBPAGES

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Background

- Development of the CareSearch website
www.caresearch.com.au
- The policy context for GPs in palliative care
- Identification of the need for specific palliative care content for general practitioners
- Formative evaluation of the GP webpages – just one part of the whole evaluation of the CareSearch website

CareSearch GP content

- **“Quick clinical guidance”** which covers:
 - Assessing prognosis
 - Pain and symptom management
 - Communication in difficult situations
 - Practical skills (taps, syringe drivers)
 - Opioid information
 - The dying patient and their caregivers
 - Palliative care emergencies
- **“Palliative care in practice”** which covers:
 - More extensive discussion of the palliative care approach, palliative care in aged care facilities, palliative care training opportunities for GPs, and getting help with difficult problems
- **An online palliative care reference library**

Evaluation Objectives 1.

- 1 To assess the uptake of the webpages by general practitioners, and the degree to which specific sections of the webpages are being used by general practitioners

- 2 To assess the user-friendliness, acceptability and value of the webpages from the perspectives of:
 - General practitioners in each of the categories of leader, participant, and occasional participant in palliative care provision (1)
 - Other health care workers who may be accessing the webpages
 - Non-health professionals who may be accessing the webpages

1. Education, Training and Support for General Practitioners in Palliative Care. Dept Health and Ageing, November 2004. Canberra

Evaluation Objectives 2.

- 3 To identify the domains in which general practitioners' confidence and willingness to provide palliative care is improved by their access to the webpages
- 4 To identify which of general practitioners' information needs are best met by an electronic resource, what other resources may be required, and whether or not these could be appropriately facilitated through the Knowledge Network in Palliative Care
- 5 To identify barriers to the use of these webpages by general practitioners

The evaluation process

- Online survey
 - To be uploaded during May
 - Feedback on acceptability and useability of the GP webpages – questions for any / all site users
 - Attitudes to and confidence about delivering different aspects of palliative care – questions for GPs only
- Focus groups – GPs only
- Site logging data

Managing the online survey

- The CareSearch research data management platform – accessible to palliative care researchers on application, free
- Allows online completion of questionnaire, simple data analysis, then import data to statistical packages for more detailed analysis
- Online survey can be “branched” – ie different sets of questions for different types of respondents

Questionnaire

Demographics

- Health professional / GP / not a health professional
- Setting of practice (metro / regional / rural or remote)
- For GPs – no. of palliative care patients in the last year,
- and length of time in current practice

Response to the webpages

- Ease of use / navigation
- Credibility
- Relevance
- Response to specific content - gaps

Questionnaire

Barriers to using the website as a source of information

Prompts given are:

Lack of time

Not the best way for me to find / access information when I need it

Not relevant to particular clinical problem

Not enough information

Too much information

Doesn't fit easily with how I practice

Other

Questionnaire

Attitudes to the GP role in palliative care

Who do you think should be responsible for providing the following aspects of palliative care to patients?

GP - Palliative care service - Both - Other: If so who?

- Psychosocial/ spiritual care of the patient
- Symptom assessment and management / prescribing
- Care in the terminal phase
- Identifying transitions / counselling about options
- Supporting caregivers
- Bereavement support

Questionnaire

GP confidence in providing palliative care

In general, how confident are you in providing each of these aspects of palliative care?

- Psychosocial/ spiritual care of the patient
- Symptom assessment and management / prescribing
- Care in the terminal phase
- Identifying transitions / counselling about options
- Supporting caregivers
- Bereavement support

Questionnaire

Preferred sources of information for each domain (*open ended question*)

- Psychosocial/ spiritual care of the patient
- Symptom assessment and management / prescribing
- Care in the terminal phase
- Identifying transitions / counselling about options
- Supporting caregivers
- Bereavement support

Levels of involvement

- With regard to your role as a palliative care provider, how would you characterise yourself?
(Tick *one* only)
 - () I am very involved, and would like to see an increased role for GPs in providing palliative care
 - () I am committed to providing good palliative care as needed, and wish to learn more
 - () I occasionally provide palliative care, but would rather to leave it to the palliative care service most of the time

Focus groups

- Invitation via the online questionnaire – GPs only; if response rate poor, further direct promotion of focus groups will occur during the intensive marketing phase of the GP webpages
- Small groups, two states (pragmatic research design – funding and practicality!)
- Facilitator and investigator present at each focus group

Issues for focus groups

- Discussion of the results of the online survey, and participants' level of agreement with those
- Exploration of GP involvement in providing different domains of palliative care, and to what extent the webpages assist GPs in each of the six domains
- How you understand the concept of “evidence based practice” as it relates to providing palliative care

Issues for focus groups

- More detailed exploration of the barriers to utilising CareSearch in your daily practice; and of which approaches to information provision will most effectively meet GPs' needs in relation to different types of palliative care problems
- Exploration of how you assess the quality of the palliative care you provide, and how you identify your needs for additional support and information.