

SA Palliative Care Community Pharmacy Update

A joint initiative of SA Palliative Care Services and Ambulatory & Primary Health

A range of resources is available to guide pharmacists as they engage with patients, carers and other health professionals when relating to palliative care issues.

Palliative Care Resources

CareSearch® (www.caresearch.com.au)

CareSearch® is a comprehensive Australian based palliative care resource, tailored to both consumers and health care professionals. The website provides:

- > Written summaries relating to palliative care symptoms and issues;
- > Links to up-to-date peer reviewed literature evidence supporting clinical decisions for conditions commonly seen in palliative care;
- > PubMed® searches supporting palliative care literature reviews pertaining to a number of standard topics including terminal care and carers; and
- > Education modules and informative newsletters

While all materials are available free of charge, some areas of the website require registration. All information contained within CareSearch® is reviewed independently prior to being uploaded.

Therapeutic Guidelines (www.tg.org.au)

The Palliative Care Therapeutic Guidelines is a practical Australian consensus text which emphasizes a community focus to palliative care. It covers a range of topics from the general (principles of palliative care, and ethical issues) to the specific (analgesia and delirium). It incorporates practical issues relating to medicines including discussions of some unlicensed indications.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) (www.pbs.gov.au)

In 2004, a specific Palliative Care Section of the PBS was introduced as part of a range of initiatives aimed to improve access to medicines for palliative patients within the community. This section allows larger quantities of medicines such as opioids. The patient must be identified as palliative, in order to access this broader list of subsidised medicines. Medicines in this section include clonazepam, hyoscine butylbromide and saliva substitutes.

EviQ Cancer Treatments online (www.eviq.org.au)

This Australian website requires users to register (for free) prior to accessing all sections. The opioid calculator is particularly useful in guiding the conversion from one opioid regime to another (i.e. fentanyl patches to morphine infusion). The resources section also contains a document listing syringe driver medication compatibility guidelines as well as online learning modules to support the ongoing continuing education of health care professionals.

Palliative Care Australia (<http://www.palliativecare.org.au>)

PCA is the peak body for palliative care in Australia and this site contains a number of links to resources for consumers and healthcare professional alike. It is a practical place to access national policies and standards relating to palliative care as well as consumer pamphlets, including some developed in response to medication related issues.

Program of Experience in the Palliative Approach (PEPA) (<http://www.pepaeducation.com/>)

The PEPA offers tailored workshops and professional clinical placements in specialist palliative care services. Registered pharmacists are eligible to apply for placements which range between 2 and 5 days duration. Placements are observational in nature with each participant allocated a mentor. The PEPA placements are fully funded for backfill, travel costs and accommodation (if needed).

For more information

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