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Building Inclusive Communities

Development of a cultural resource for the provision of appropriate palliative care.

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Who we are

established in 1981



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Where we are

- MCMPC is responsible for the care of clients residing in the LGAs of Darebin, Hume, Moreland and Yarra

- have an integrated model of care, working closely with three RDNS operational sites in the provision of community-based palliative care

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Demographics

- the total population of the catchment area was 521,922 in 2008, which exceeds the predicted population of 508,781 persons based on the 2001 census data

- 34% of the population were born outside Australia, mostly in non-English speaking countries; 43% of clients prefer to speak a language other than English at home

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Demographics

- over the next decade, the catchment's population is projected to age due to a decrease in the size of the population aged less than 25 years combined with a significant increase in the population aged 60 years and over

- there is a wide range of religious beliefs within the catchment area

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Background

- supervision of 2nd year medical students from Monash University
- undertake a Community Based Placement to help them develop an inter-professional perspective on the social models of health interventions in the community
- students get involved in day-to-day elements of placement as well as undertake a project

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The Project

- determine what, if any, resources were available for staff in the area of cultural sensitivity around dying and death
- ascertain why these were, or were not, being used
- develop a resource that is simple, easily accessed, and contained relevant information

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What was being used

- not an awful lot!
- mainly due to nature of the information – verbose
- difficult to find relevant information easily in among everything else that happens during the day
- also difficulty in gaining access to the information when in a client's home

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What was needed

- groups studied:
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Orthodox Christian, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Judaism

- information on
  - background to a religion/culture and broad general information
  - significance of dying and death to that religion/culture
  - clinical impacts of religious/cultural customs for staff
  - major religious/cultural celebrations, ceremonies etc

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What was developed

- simple booklet that could be left at the office, or taken out when visiting clients if needs be
  - clear and concise
  - split into the four perspectives for each religion/culture

- information came from peer-reviewed journals, verifiable internet sources, books etc

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Survey of staff

- had a promotion and three week trial of the resource
  - copies placed in office and staff room
  - staff alerted to their presence
- staff sent questionnaires about use and usefulness of the resource
- 13 responses, across all groups of staff
  - nursing and medical
  - allied care
  - administration

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Results

- all agreed that they had a need for greater religious/cultural awareness in some cases
- the resource was found to be easily accessible and user friendly
- the allied care team found it to be especially helpful in their work

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Where to from here?

- finalising layout and printing options of resource
  - Will be in a format where extra religions/cultures can be easily added
- adding a section on Maori culture alongside colleagues from New Zealand
- will undertake further evaluation over the next few months as to the level of use and usefulness of the resource

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Thank you



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