CareSearch Project Research Studies Register: Registration Proforma	0036

Study Title: Survey of hospice and palliative care bereavement services in Australia

Brief description of the study:

Background

While it is recognised that the provision of bereavement support is integral to the model of palliative care and is incorporated into National Standards (Palliative Care Australia 2005a), this aspect of the model has not been an area of significant research in Australia. It is unknown what types of bereavement services are provided in Australia, nor what the staffing profile and funding issues are. This makes it difficult for organisations like Palliative Care Australia to identify what is currently happening with bereavement services. This information is needed to inform bereavement service policy, future requirements in workforce planning and educational initiatives. Using the expertise of Professor Sheila Payne in the UK, a research methodology similar to surveys undertaken in the US and UK will allow comparisons to be made with these countries.

Aims

This study aims:

- To examine the nature of adult bereavement support provided in hospice and palliative care services in Australia and
- To describe the profile of staffing that undertakes bereavement support

Methodology

A national postal survey, based on a survey tool developed for the UK study (Field, Reid, Payne, Relf, 2004), is being conducted. Survey packages have been mailed to bereavement co-coordinators/managers of the service using information from the current Palliative Care National Directory. An article about bereavement service provision and advertising the study has been placed in the Palliative Care Australia e-bulletin. A reminder notice will be placed in the next e-bulletin.

Information being collected by the survey includes: the position and background of who provides the service, length of time the service has been provided, number of deaths per year, details of service provided, type of data collected, personnel profile, training and education, research activities, suggestions for change/improvement of service and difficulties encountered.

Survey responses will be coded and entered on computer for descriptive analysis (frequency distributions & mean scores will be calculated) using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The open-ended responses will be analysed by the research team using content analysis, to draw out common themes and differences, particularly in relation to suggestions for change in service delivery. The data will be used to compare and contrast with the UK data from the same survey.

Study Methodology: (Please mark with an x which type of study methodology)

	Epidemiology
X	**Health Services / Health Economics / Quality Improvement**
	Qualitative, Observational or Descriptive
	Mixed Method
	Systematic Review
	Intervention: RCT
	Intervention: Comparative or cohort study
	Intervention: Case series

Project details:

Funding source (Optional): Helen Macpherson Smith Trust; Monash University Vivian Bullwinkel Memorial Fund.						
Has the study received ethics approval?	**X**	Yes		No		Not applicable
Project starting date: **05.06.07**						
Project completion date: **31.01.08**						
Multi site:		Yes	**X**	No		Not applicable

RESEARCHERS

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Investigator B (Name)	Professor Sheila Payne
Investigator C (Name)	Dr Jo Abbott
Investigator D (Name)	Dr Louise Peters
Investigator E (Name)	

Associated publications / reports:

O'Connor, M., Abbott, J., Payne S. & Demmer, C. (2009). A comparison of bereavement services provided in hospice and palliative care settings in Australia, the UK and the USA. *Progress in Palliative Care,* 17(2), 69-74.

Abbott, J., **O'Connor, M.** & Payne, S. (2008). An Australian survey of palliative care and hospice bereavement services. *The Australian Journal of Cancer Nursing,* 9(2), 12-17.

O'Connor, M., Payne, S., Demmer, C. & Abbott, JA. (2009, May). A comparison of bereavement services provided in hospice and palliative care settings in Australia, the UK and the US. [Abstract]. Poster session presented at *the 11th Congress of the European Association for Palliative Care, Vienna.*





Topics: Bereavement, Planning and Managing Palliative Care Services