CareSearch Project Research Studies Register: Registration Proforma	0135

Study Title: Withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining medical treatment from adults who lack capacity: The role of law in medical practice

Brief description of the study:

Decisions to withhold and withdraw life-sustaining treatment are a necessary and legitimate part of medical practice. We estimate that over 30,000 adult deaths occur each year across New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria (and almost 40,000 deaths nationally) following a medical decision to withhold or withdraw life-sustaining treatment. Yet the extent to which these decisions are lawful is unknown.

This project aims to determine doctors' knowledge and practice in relation to the law that governs decisions to withhold or withdraw life-sustaining treatment from adults who lack capacity. It will identify training and educational needs, and find ways to improve the law by suggesting reforms. In doing so, the project aims to produce better outcomes for patients and their family and friends, to enhance clinical practice through promoting lawful decision-making, and to reduce health expenditure incurred because of defensive medicine and legal compliance costs.

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): ARC Linkage Project						
Has the study received ethics approval?	**X**	Yes		No		Not applicable
Project starting date: 2010						
Project completion date: 2013						
Multi site:		Yes		No	**X**	Not applicable

RESEARCHERS

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Investigator C (Name)	Colleen Cartwright

Investigator D (Name)	Malcolm Parker
Investigator E (Name)	Gail Williams

Final Report: White B, Willmott L, Cartwright C, Parker M, Williams G. Withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining medical treatment from adults who lack capacity: The role of law in medical practice: Final report (570kb pdf). Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology; 2017.

Associated publications / reports:

B White, L Willmott, C Cartwright, M Parker and G Williams, What do emergency physicians think of law? (2012) 24(4) Emergency Medicine Australasia 344-356

B White, L Willmott, C Cartwright, M Parker and G Williams, Should law have a role in end-of-life care? (2012) 42(9) Internal Medicine Journal 966-967

B White, L Willmott and S-N Then, Adults who lack capacity: Substituted decision-making in B White, F McDonald and L Willmott (eds), Health Law in Australia, Thomson (2010) pp149-207

L Willmott, B White and S-N Then, Withholding and Withdrawal of Life-Sustaining Medical Treatment in B White, F McDonald and L Willmott (eds), Health Law in Australia, Thomson (2010) pp449-490

B White, L Willmott, P Trowse, M Parker and C Cartwright, The Legal Role of Medical Professionals in Decisions to Withhold or Withdraw Life-sustaining Treatment: Part 1 (New South Wales) (2011) 18(3) Journal of Law and Medicine 498

L Willmott, B White, M Parker and C Cartwright, The Legal Role of Medical Professionals in Decisions to Withhold or Withdraw Life-sustaining Treatment: Part 2 (Queensland) (2011) 18(3) Journal of Law and Medicine 523

L Willmott, B White, M Parker and C Cartwright, The Legal Role of Medical Professionals in Decisions to Withhold or Withdraw Life-sustaining Treatment: Part 3 (Victoria) (2011) 18(4) Journal of Law and Medicine 773

Topics (Admin only) Decision making, Legal