

Palliative Care aims to improve the quality of life for people with a progressive life-threatening illness, their families and care givers through early identification, assessment and treatment of :pain, physical, cultural , psychological and spiritual needs

Palliative care is

MORE THAN JUST THE PATIENT – involves the family, caregivers and the community

MORE THAN CANCER – all progressive illness

MORE THAN MEDICAL AND PHYSICAL NEEDS –includes cultural, psychological, social, spiritual needs, needs of the family and care givers.

MORE THAN THE GP CAN DO ALONE- Palliative Care is active care and demands a multidisciplinary approach.

A Palliative Care Approach

- Provides relief from pain and other distressing symptoms.
- Affirms life and regards dying as a normal process
- Intends neither to hasten or postpone death
- Enhances quality of life and may also positively influence the course of illness
- Is applicable early in the course of illness, in conjunction with other therapies that are intended to prolong life

The Role of the General Practice Team

1. identification of patients who would benefit from a Palliative Care Approach
2. Seek assessment from a specialist palliative care service when required
3. Communicate with the multidisciplinary team and identify who would benefit from a coordinated approach (GP management plan, Team Care Arrangements or Case Conferences)
4. Provision of information to patients, Families and Caregivers

Your Local Palliative Care Team

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Population Health Approach

The expected deaths per annum in Australia are 64,000 people. They can be conceptualised as falling into three broad groups. The largest group (63%) are those patients who do not require specialised care, but whose needs are met through primary care The second group of patients are those who may have sporadic exacerbations of pain and other symptoms and may need specialist care services for consultation and advice. The third group are those as having complex physical, social, psychological and or spiritual needs. They require care implemented by specialist practitioners in partnership with primary care providers.

When do GPs refer to palliative care services? EARLIER is better than later.

Ask yourself

“Is this patient likely to die within the next 12 months?” If the answer is YES, commence the journey with your patient towards quality care in the time they have left. Consider discussing choices with patients and planning ahead. Consider quality of life issues, end of life directives and medical power of attorney.

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