



Australian Divisions of General Practice

Rural Palliative Care Program NEWSLETTER

Issue 2

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Project Updates

KALGOORLIE -BOULDER PROJECT

- The Project has secured two key speakers and is negotiating with a third for a three part series next year as part of the GP CPD program. All three speakers are local Perth specialists.
- The Project has had outstanding success with CCP (Caring Communities Project) education this month with attendance from 18 registered nurses from hospital, community, nursing homes, and a practice nurse. The workshops are part of the Edith Cowan University professional nursing post graduate program which articulates into post graduate courses.
- Day one of the 3 day personal care aides palliative care course which is competency based had similar success with strong attendance. The course is run by the Cancer Foundation Education Unit at Cottage Hospice and is part funded by state health. The caring communities' project funded both courses.
- Data collected by the domiciliary service will be available through PalCIS when consent and ethics are complete.
- Staff at the domiciliary service are considering collection of data in paper format, given the demands of existing documentation requirements.
- There have been challenges with the installation of the PalCIS software at the hospital.
- The CCP and this Project report to one advisory committee. The terms of reference and membership are presently under review.
- The GP resource kit is being finalised for feedback and distribution to Kalgoorlie GP's.
- The RPC program is largely dependant on the ongoing CCP project. Members of the advisory group have formed a sub committee to develop a business case to on-fund the CCP project past 30 April 2005.

SOUTH EAST NSW DGP

- The Project recently held several training sessions including:
 - Pain Management for Palliative Care which attracted 45 participants
 - Managing Common Complications, 52 participants.
 - A workshop on Bereavement Services and Issues for Children and Adults is planned for 7 December.
- There will be an After Hours On Call Workshop on 13 December for the 17 people participating on the roster (6 doctors, a pharmacist and 10 nurses).
- Weekly meetings are held at Batemans Bay and Moruya Hospital following discharge planning meetings. Meetings are occasionally held at the doctor's surgery.
- The Advisory Committee meet once a month and include representatives from all services.
- PalCIS (Palliative Care Clinical Information System) database is now being used and most faults have been resolved. Two palm pilots have been purchased for on call staff upon completion of the workshop in December.
- Several resources have now been developed and are now available: A Guide to Referral; Resource Directory; Planning a Meaningful Funeral; Making a Will; Advance Care Directives; Children and Loss; Morphine; Protocol Manual.
- A palliative care specialist is available usually once a month to visit patients and provide education.

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MID NORTH COAST DGP

- The Project was launched on 31 August at the Osprey Restaurant at Southern Cross University
- A Palliative Care Link Nurse education workshop was held on 7-8 October. Twenty five registered nurses attended. The focus of the workshop was "Providing a palliative approach to care for older people".
- The Project has completed the trial phase of PalCIS and Palm Pilots. Several difficulties with the operating system and software programming were identified and hopefully most are now rectified.
- A registered nurse at Coffs Harbour Health Campus has been seconded to the Project for 2 days a week over the next for six months.
- A specialist physician has joined the weekly interdisciplinary Palliative Care team meeting.
- Plans for the establishment of the after-hours telephone support service are progressing steadily. The service should be available by March.

WEST VIC DGP

- The Project has developed a paper based patient held record and will be trialling once patients are enrolled.
- Delivered professional education to nurses, both division one and two and personal care attendants via four workshops. Two CPD events have been provided to GPs, pharmacists, nurses and other allied health staff in two major localities. These workshops have been very well received.
- The Project has established a governance committee with representation from the two palliative care services, the local palliative care physician and a consumer representative. The consumer representative is valuable in providing a non-medicalised view of the project and reminding everyone of the impact of research on the patients and their families.
- West Vic DGP is developing a promotion strategy to increase the awareness of palliative care services and encourage use of the services in the pre-terminal phase. They are also developing promotional material containing local information, not just about the palliative care services, but other services which can be of use to a person with a life-limiting illness.
- The resignation of one of the palliative care coordinators was a major setback, but fortunately the West Vic team are starting to feel that most of the problems are behind them and they are looking forward to 2005.

NORTH WEST TAS DGP

- The Project has now completed primary provider and GP focus groups at pilot sites in collaboration with the Caring Communities Project.
- Patient recruitment commences on 1 December 2004.
- Practice Nurses who work in the participating GP practices are responsible for completing the patient registration/recruitment to the Project.
- Project has developed a Service Provider Information Kit.
- Education events include: Multidisciplinary Education Evening; Specialist Palliative Care Team Project Workshop; Community Nursing Education Afternoon.
- The Project has implemented small group learning modules (CPD point allocation) with project key link community and practice nurses and members of the Palliative Care Team.
- A patient information brochure has also been produced and disseminated.
- Christmas Executive and Advisory Committee Meetings have been scheduled for December.
- Two editions of the Project newsletter have now been published.

PILBARA DGP

- A new Project Coordinator was employed in October. Pilbara DGP is pleased to welcome Pam Hickingbotham on board.
- Pilbara DGP are reviewing their palliative care model and making adjustments to facilitate improvement of service. They are at the point of clarifying their role in the community to supply support to those delivering care.
- Two part-time coordinators have been employed. One based in Karratha and the other in Port Hedland.
- An information meeting is planned for 8 December with Karratha community stakeholders. Such a meeting in Port Hedland will follow early 2005.
- Links with palliative care providers in the towns and communities surrounding Karratha and Port Hedland have been maintained while the review process is still underway.
- Training options and plans for 2005 will be articulated by end of 2004. The goal is to have simultaneous community launching of palliative care program plans for both Karratha and Port Hedland in early 2005.

SOUTHERN QLD RURAL DGP

- After attending the ADGP Forum RPCP South Burnett adopted a name change to incorporate early referrals who do not identify themselves as being palliative. The service is now known as the *Rural Palliative and Advanced Care Program (RPAC)*.
- The RPAC Project was launched on 28 October with 6 patients currently registered. The launch received good, local media coverage.
- All GPs, domiciliary and community health nursing services and the local hospitals have been issued with an RPAC Admission kit.
- RPAC has sourced brochures from Palliative Care Queensland – covering clinical and legal issues such as nausea, nutrition, advanced care directives, plus information on funerals and carers.
- Toowoomba Hospice will activate their After Hours phone service on 29 November 2004. Guidelines will be reviewed as the service rolls out. Encryption tools will allow PaCIS files to be emailed.
- An education day held on 9 October 2004 was well attended by Hospital Medical Staff, GPs and Registered & Enrolled Nurses from the South Burnett. This was presented by a team from Mt Olivett, Brisbane and the CEO of Wesley Hospital Radiation Oncology Unit, Brisbane.
- The updated PaCIS is being trialled along with a Palm Pilot, by a Blue Care palliative/domiciliary nurse.

ADELAIDE HILLS DGP

- Palliative Care educational programs are underway. The first study day for RNs and ENs was held in November, with a study day for health care workers planned for February, and a CPD evening for GPs in March.
- A Palliative Care link nurse group is being established with the majority of Residential Aged Care Facilities and local Hospitals represented.
- Resource folders have been introduced into surgeries, and clinical updates by the GP advisor are to become a regular educational feature.
- A quarterly newsletter is about to be released for health care professionals. A similar version with a community focus is also to be developed.
- Final ethics approval has been received. The community representative on the Governance committee has helped with a guide to make the 4-stage patient consent form more user friendly. PaCIS database training is planned for the first week of December.
- The Project Officer has been invited to sit on the Advisory Group for the Southern Country Commonwealth Carer respite centre, which has a large local Palliative Care focus.

Coordinator Profile - Ms Suzanne Blogg



Suzanne started in her role as Project Officer for the South East NSW Division of General Practice on 30 June 2004. She was already working for the Division in a part time position assisting with research and grants and had assisted the previous Project

Officer with the evaluation aspects of the program. Suzanne was encouraged to apply for the position and was interested in what the service had to offer the local community.

Suzanne has an interest in public health and also in education. Last year she taught a unit on *Dealing with Loss and Grief* to Year 9 students at Carroll College in Broulee. She had

also assisted her husband when he did after hours on-call in Melbourne as a locum and was aware of the challenges for families dealing with palliative care in the home.

Suzanne has spent many years working in developing countries and also training Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders in aspects of public health and field epidemiology. She spent 4 years working as a Public Health Officer in NSW Health Department and 2 years as Director of the Master of Applied Epidemiology (Indigenous Health) and the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health.

Palliative care is a new area of work for Suzanne and she has already found it to be very rewarding and challenging.



Members of the RPAC Steering Committee and a SQRDGP Board Member at the RPAC Launch.

On Thursday 28 October the Rural Palliative & Advanced Care Program (RPAC) was officially launched in Kingaroy by Dorothy Pratt, MLA.

Currently, the Program is being run in Kingaroy with other areas of the South Burnett coming online early 2005.

The Medical and Nursing Fraternities involved with RPAC have been issued with an Admission Kit as all patients will require a medical referral.

A palliative education day was held at the Kingaroy TAFE College on Saturday 9th October, as part of the Rural Palliative & Advanced Care Program.

Hospital Medical Staff, ten GP's and 31 Registered and Enrolled Nurses from the South Burnett attended education sessions presented by a team from Mt Olivett (Dr Liz Reymond and RN's Fiona Israel and Helen Palos) and Dr Bernie Mason the CEO of Wesley Hospital Radiation Oncology Unit in Brisbane.



This full day of education was greatly appreciated; evidenced by some of the evaluation comments:

"Excellent and informative day"

"Very good and much needed information"

"Thank you for presenting this information in the bush, well done"

"Knowledge base extended . . . also knowing where to go for help and networking, thank you very much"

The education day also attracted sponsorship from Mundipharma and Norgine.

Eurobodalla Palliative Care Service

Eurobodalla now has 12 health professionals that are on the roster for the after hours on-call service. They include five GPs, two oncology nurses, two nurses from a private nursing group (Illawarra Retirement Trust), one registered nurse and one enrolled nurse from Moruya Hospital and a hospital pharmacist.

The Project will be conducting a training session for them in the next month or so. Since 30 August they have had 22 patients referred to the service with four doctors referring patients as well as the oncology clinic, community nurses and relatives. A training conducted on pain management by a Palliative Care Specialist, Dr David Gorman, attracted 45 people in Narooma. A training day held on 17 November on Managing Common Complications in Palliative Care attracted approximately 30 registrants.

Several multidisciplinary team meetings have occurred that have resulted in more services being provided to palliative care patients, including the use of a pastoral care worker on two occasions.



Volunteers include: Vi Quinn, Jan Phillips, Jacqueline Gallagher, Stan Lewis and Faye Salter.



The advisory committee includes: Vi Quinn, Sue Konjevic, Suzanne Blogg and Dr Martin Carlson.

CareSearch

www.caresearch.com.au

CareSearch (www.caresearch.com.au) is an evidence-based resource for those involved in providing palliative care. It has tried to capture Australia's missing palliative care literature and make it available to practitioners, educators and researchers.

This missing literature is housed in four databases:

1. Conference abstracts: Organisers for major palliative and associated conferences held since 1980 have been approached for conference proceedings and for permission to post abstracts on the website. The proceedings were reviewed and relevant abstracts identified. These were then included on the website. As time and resources allow conference abstracts are being evaluated against design and research criteria.
2. Journal articles: This involved the comparison of the indexes of articles for 12 palliative care journals against the electronic bibliographic indexes of Ovid Medline, CINAHL, Embase and PsycINFO. Articles that were not found on these four bibliographic indexes have citation details included on the CareSearch website. Where permissions were granted, the abstract was also included.
3. Theses and treatises: Australian universities were asked to identify theses and treatises completed within their institution dealing with palliative care. Details of these academic investigations have been included.
4. Grey Literature: State and National departments responsible for palliative care and major palliative organisations were asked to provide reports and

documents pertaining to palliative care. Details of these reports were included on the website.

To complement the literature resource held on CareSearch, we have also developed a series of search approaches to help busy clinicians and researchers find relevant articles and evidence in the traditional bibliographic networks. Visitors to the site can develop searches for use in the Ovid Medline environment or they can select a palliative topic and level of evidence and link directly to the PubMed database to run a search and view the results immediately. They also have the opportunity to access publicly available databases and free on-line journals relevant to palliative care through this site.

The website also houses an exciting research tool to support multi-site collaborative research. Researchers can design and trial surveys online and input data from multiple sites while maintaining control from a single coordinating site. There is also the capacity to run e-mail based or website based surveys.

Over the next 12 months we will be developing evidence summaries on palliative topics to help inform those involved in the delivery of palliative care.

We would welcome feedback from everyone involved in the care of palliative patients and their families on the usefulness of this site and directions for further resources.

Contact person: Jennifer Tieman, Project Manager
Flinders University, C/- Repatriation General Hospital
700 Goodwood Road, Daw Park SA 5041. Ph: (08) 8276 9666, Ext 1404. E-mail: Jennifer.Tieman@rgh.sa.gov.au

From the RPC Program Management Team

The 8th Australian Palliative Care Conference - *New Horizons* is taking place on 30th August - 2nd September 2005 at Darling Harbour, Sydney. Abstract submissions close on 1 March 2005. Please contact the RPC program management team if you are interested in presenting a paper (either jointly with ADGP or independently) and require assistance in preparing your abstract or poster presentation. For more information on this conference please visit their website: www.pallcare.org.au

The second round of RPC Project site visits will commence early in the New Year. The RPC Program management team will be contacting Projects within the next few weeks, if we have not already done so, to arrange suitable times.

The RPC Program Management Team wishes you all a very happy and safe Christmas and New Year.



NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Please distribute this newsletter to your colleagues. People wishing to receive this newsletter should contact Wendy Campbell (details below). Copies of this newsletter are posted on the RPC Program website: <http://www.adgp.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=2965>

RPC PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Ian Hatton, National Consultant
Wendy Campbell, Program Officer
Rural Palliative Care Program, ADGP,
PO Box 4308, Manuka ACT 2603
Tel: 02 6228 0835 Fax: 02 6228 0899
Email: wcampbell@adgp.com.au