

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Planning for Palliative Care

Dr Graydon Davison from the School of Management is collaborating with Professor David Currow, of Flinders University and Cancer Australia and Professor Phyllis Butow from the University of Sydney, in conjunction with Southern Adelaide Palliative Services, Daw House Hospice and the Southern Division of General Practice to investigate case conferencing and care planning for people with life-limiting illness through funding from the Australian Department of Health and Ageing Local Palliative Care Grants Program.

'Patients in palliative care who receive a case conference tend to have a better quality of life and functioning for longer compared to those patients who do not receive a case conference' says Dr Davison. 'Case conferencing involves the development of teams comprised of health practitioners who function as a cohesive team to design specifically tailored care for the patient. Previous research has highlighted difficulties in arranging interactive case conferences between three or more health care providers and the situation is further complicated by the implementation of different care plans other than those developed through case conferencing. This project will look at different care plans and disease management within the palliative care setting and will also explore which specific elements of case conferences are associated with maximum patient benefits.'

The team will work closely with GPs and palliative care services to conduct a randomised trial of the effectiveness of case conferencing alone or case conferencing in association with the implementation of care plans. An in-depth analysis of the results of



the trial will identify the optimum content and team composition of case conferences and whether there is merit in combining case conferencing with the development of detailed care plans to provide a superior service to terminally ill patients.

The results will provide valuable information and evidence to palliative care services and health practitioners regarding optimum planning and care for people with life limiting illness, thus providing better quality of life and a greater sense of well-being to these patients and their families.

Project Title: Exploratory study of case conferencing and care planning
Funding has been set at: \$19,000
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<http://www.uws.edu.au/school/management>
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