

Title: Evaluating the current discharge process of palliative care patients from RBWH

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Aim

This 18 month project will develop a discharge planning process for palliative care patients at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, based on the inclusion of a patient held record supplying palliative care specific information to community doctors, and a case conference between the patient's GP and community health staff, and RBWH palliative care staff. This paper describes preliminary results of the evaluation of current issues around discharge for patients with palliative needs from the perspectives of key stakeholders.

Methods

Qualitative data on the current experience of discharge was collected and analysed from focus groups or interviews of hospital, community staff and recently bereaved carers. Quantitative data was collected and analysed from a survey of community GPs and a random file audit of patients referred to the service in January and February 2007.

Results

The discharge process where patients are referred to the Palliative Care Service at RBWH is substantially accepted as satisfactory by participants. Delays in receiving medical and pharmaceutical information for community providers was clearly identified, and most problematic when discharges are rushed. The majority of GPs were neutral or satisfied with the quality of information about patients with palliative needs who are discharged, and the accessibility of the Palliative Care Service at RBWH.

Implications

While the Discharge process at RBWH is generally well regarded, issues relevant to sharing palliative care information could be improved. These will be trialled during project currently underway.

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