

ABSTRACT

The Centre for Palliative Care Research and Education **6th Annual Research Conference**

Title of Project: Improving End-of-Life Care in Residential Aged Care.

Name of Author and Presenter: Ruth Hohn
Project Co-Ordinator.

Organisation: Canossa Services, Oxley.

Aims: The aims for the project are that residential care staff would be better able to recognize the signs of end-of-life and be confident and skilled in symptom assessment and interventions, allowing residents to die in their own facility, cared for by familiar staff.

Methods: Funding was sought from the department of Health and Aging and a project Co-Ordinator was appointed. A retrospective audit was conducted using an adapted format utilizing the “principles of a good death” (BMJ2000;320:129) which identified current practices in end-of-life care. An end-of-life care pathway was developed and criteria were identified which best described the terminal phase. Education was given to all nurses throughout the facility. Prior to the implementation of the pathways, nurses were surveyed to identify knowledge and understanding regarding end-of-life care - this will be compared with a post-pathway survey.

Results: An audit conducted after 4 months using the pathways in aged care facilities was compared with data collected in the retrospective chart audit. This has demonstrated an improvement in aspects of end of life care for residents at Canossa Services Oxley. When the terminal phase was identified, 40% of residents and their families knew death was coming and what to expect compared with 80% post pathways; 70% of non essential medications were ceased before the pathways compared with 90% after; 60% of non essential tests were ceased before the pathways compared with 90% with the use of pathways.

Implications: The implications for improved end-of-life care have been demonstrated. We anticipate that this trend will continue as we provide ongoing support and education for our nurses and improve the care for residents in the end stages of their life.