

Centre for Palliative Care Research and Education
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Conference Abstract – Oral Presentation

Title of Project:

Accompanying them home: The ethics of hospice palliative care.

Author's Name:

Dr. Monika Wilson

Research Organisation:

Queensland University of Technology, Applied Ethics - Humanities Program

Aims:

Explorative: How is the ethical dimension of hospice palliative care practice articulated and understood by its professional members.

Methods:

A qualitative-narrative inquiry methodology was utilised. Thirty interdisciplinary hospice palliative care professionals from sixteen practice settings across Queensland were interviewed.

Results:

A range of significant ethical insights were located in this research project and a reflective, educational model was developed.

Implications:

The ethical framework developed from this research evidence can help maintain, sustain and protect the unique identity of the profession. It can provide important guidance to palliateurs reflecting on how best to provide quality, compassionate and ethical care at the end of life. It directly pertains to Standards 7 and 13 of the PCA Standards.

Abstract:

The local research evidence gained from this project fills a gap in our understandings of the ethical nature of hospice palliative care (HPC) practice. This professional practice has developed significantly since the 1980s here in Australia, yet broader investigations of the ethics of this practice have not been given sufficient consideration in the growing accumulation of the research literature. This inquiry offers key insights into the ethics of practice, including the changes to the philosophy of care which underpins hospice palliative care, the apparent confusion around a common, shared understanding of the purpose of the practice, and important understandings about the centrality and ethical nature of our caring relationships. These insights were translated into a practical, reflective ethics model which can provide important guidance to palliateurs reflecting on how best to provide quality, compassionate and ethical care at the end of life.

This research was awarded the 2009 Ian Maddocks Guest Lecture Award.