

## **Centre for Palliative Care Research and Education Conference 2010**

### **Title: Enhancing access to palliative care for people living with End Stage Heart Failure (ESHF)**

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#### **Introduction:**

People with End Stage Heart Failure (ESHF) are disadvantaged with regard to palliative care services. In Metro South Health Service District (MSHSD) a project is underway to develop and trial a model of care that addresses this disadvantage. To inform the project it is necessary to understand the barriers to palliative care experienced by these patients, within MSHSD.

#### **Aim:**

To identify barriers for providing palliative care for people with ESHF, as perceived by specialist cardiology and palliative care clinicians.

#### **Method:**

A semi-structured questionnaire targeting possible barriers to care was developed. Respondents were asked to rate whether they 'Agree', 'Disagree' or were 'Uncertain' about statements as they pertained to care in their clinical unit. Additionally, they were asked to identify three issues they considered to be the most important barriers to care.

#### **Results:**

The questionnaire was distributed at five venues. Eighty-two responses were received from clinicians: 27 from cardiology / heart failure, 34 from palliative care, 9 from aged care and general practice and 12 responses were unidentified. Responses by profession included doctors 39%, nurses 40% and allied health 20%. The top four barriers identified by all clinicians were: difficulties with prognostication, patients' desires to only focus on active ongoing treatment, difficulties discussing prognosis with patients, a lack of palliative care resources / services to treat advanced heart failure patients.

#### **Implications:**

A proposed model of collaborative care targeting these clinician identified barriers will begin to be trialed in April in MSHSD. Key elements of the model that address the barriers will be discussed.