

Position Statement: The role of nurses in supporting clinical research in palliative care

Preamble

Research is critical to building the evidence, advancing knowledge and improving outcomes for people with palliative care needs, their families and the Australian health care system.

Nurses provide valuable insights into the needs of people involved in palliative care research, as well as providing solutions to the practical issues of conducting and implementing research within their clinical setting.

Nurses caring for people with palliative care needs are encouraged to seek opportunities to contribute to the design and conduct of research, assist with recruitment and/or build their capabilities as independent researchers.

Doctorate and Masters Research prepared nurses are ideally equipped to contribute to the development of new knowledge and lead independent palliative care research projects.

This aim of this position statement is to encourage nurses caring for people with palliative care needs to: support clinical research activities and participation in their practice setting; and develop the capabilities required to become good consumers of the evidence and independent researchers.

Background

Palliative Care Nurses Australia Inc. (PCNA) is a national member-based organisation for nurses working with people who are living with and dying from a life-limiting illness, and their families. Our vision is to promote excellence in palliative care nursing for our community, through leadership, representation and professional support. The World Health Organization (2002) definition of palliative care underpins our clinical practice, research and education endeavours.

Palliative Care Nurses Australia believes that:

- It is the right of every person with palliative care needs to be provided with an opportunity to participate in clinical research;
- Nurses play a key role in fostering a culture of enquiry and ensuring the provision of best evidence-based palliative care practice within their organisation;
- Nurses have a responsibility to ensure that eligible people are:
 - Provided with every opportunity to consider participation in the study. This includes direct provision of information to the person or their family regarding participation and enabling communication with the research team;

- Supported throughout research participation. This may include assisting them to carry out relevant participation related tasks (e.g. study diary), and/or with addressing any participation-related queries by facilitating communication with the research team;
- Provided with timely and ongoing evidence-based palliative care throughout the research process; and
- Respected, have their rights upheld and their safety maintained throughout the research process.
- Nurses are encouraged to contribute to:
 - Enabling their healthcare organisations to create and maintain an environment that supports people with palliative care needs, their families and health professionals to be actively engaged in research;
 - Supporting researchers to design feasible and realistic studies that answer important research questions and use appropriate measures;
 - Recruiting participants who meet eligibility criteria;
 - Ensuring the accuracy, verifiability, and reproducibility of the collected research data; and
 - Assisting with dissemination and implementation of the study results.
- Nurses with Doctorates or Masters Research degrees are encouraged to lead or co-lead well designed palliative care research projects.