

Learning objectives across the GP professional life

Medical student

Communication skills and the patient-doctor relationship

- Describe specific communication skills to be able to best care for patients and their families/carers at the end-of-life, and the families/carer's progress beyond the patient's death during their bereavement phase.

Applied professional knowledge and skill

- Describe the pathology, including both malignant and nonmalignant terminal and chronic illness and some understanding of prognosis and quality of life issues.
- Describe the anatomical and physical aspects of incurable, life limiting disease processes.
- Outline how a significant proportion of patients with incurable diseases require the doctor to exhibit skills for 'caring' rather than 'curing' and how to help patients and their families/carers to prioritise care on the basis of quality of life.

Population health and the context of general practice

- Describe the role of GPs in the palliative care setting and GPs operating within a multidisciplinary framework to provide palliative care to patients from a holistic, physical, psychosocial and spiritual perspective.

Professional and ethical role

- Be able to seek help and care for own physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs in this emotionally charged area of work.

Organisational and legal dimensions

- Outline team care and care planning arrangements that are possible for both funding and organising care in a general practice palliative care setting.

Learning objectives across the GP professional life

Prevocational doctor

Assumed level of knowledge – medical student

Communication skills and the patient-doctor relationship

- Demonstrate skills in taking a thorough history (physical, emotional, psychosocial and spiritual) in a patient with a life limiting illness.
- Demonstrate skills in competently communicating 'bad news' and discussing prognosis, and empathically being able to redefine realistic goals for 'hope' and 'care' at the end-of-life.

Applied professional knowledge and skill

- Demonstrate skills in being able to elicit reporting of common symptoms seen in palliative care, be able to use symptom checklists and screening tools when needed, and organise a prioritised management check list in line with the patient's and/or their family's expressed wishes.
- Demonstrate skills in being able to organise appropriate investigations in a palliative patient, taking into consideration the context of the patient's illness.
- Demonstrate skills in being able to perform a thorough examination in a patient with a life limiting illness.
- Be aware of drugs commonly used in palliative care and their indications, doses and routes of administration.

Population health and the context of general practice

- Describe how to assess and describe each patient's links to family and friends.
- Demonstrate an ability to advocate for equity of access to multidisciplinary palliative care services particularly members of disadvantaged groups and their families/carers.

Professional and ethical role

- Demonstrate skills in being able to devise comprehensive management plans in partnership with patients and their families/carers to enhance quality of life at the end-of-life.
- Ensure self care measures are in place for the treating GP and other care team members.

Organisational and legal dimensions

- Demonstrate familiarity with completing death certificates, advanced health directives, enduring guardianship requirements, carer's allowance applications and other legislative and administrative requirements relevant to palliative care and end-of-life issues.

Learning objectives across the GP professional life

Vocational registrar

Assumed level of knowledge – prevocational doctor

Communication skills and the patient-doctor relationship

- Demonstrate awareness in defining the realistic context of illness at the end-of-life for the patient and their family.
- Demonstrate specific communication skills in dealing with end-of-life issues such as giving bad news, counselling regarding realistic expectations and hope, nutrition and hydration, exploring and managing requests for euthanasia.

Applied professional knowledge and skills

- Demonstrate skills in managing bereavement issues for families/carers and coordinating services to meet these needs when ongoing care and support is required.
- Demonstrate management skills in dealing with the psychological, social, cultural and spiritual aspects of the patient's illness, and the impact of these on patient care.

Population health and the context of general practice

- Demonstrate establishment of relationships and networks with other community services that are necessary to provide quality palliative care (nursing, allied health and domiciliary services) equitably across the local population as needed.

Professional and ethical role

- Demonstrate skills in dealing with ethical issues in patient care at the end-of-life.

Organisational and legal dimensions

- Demonstrate the ability to lobby local health service providers to provide essential health services for palliative care patients as needed in the patient's or carer's preferred place of care.
- Demonstrate the ability to advocate on behalf of patients in relation to meeting their palliative care needs.²⁴
- Demonstrate awareness of the palliative care services available in the patient's community, and be able to access these services to optimise patient care.
- Demonstrate familiarity with completing death certificates, advanced health directives, enduring guardianship requirements, carer's allowance applications and other legislative and administrative requirements relevant to palliative care and end-of-life issues in the general practice setting.

Learning objectives across the GP professional life

Continuing professional development

Assumed level of knowledge – vocational registrar

Communication skills and the patient-doctor relationship

- Demonstrate commitment to upskilling regularly in communication skills acquisition associated with managing challenging end-of-life issues for patients and their families/carers.

Applied professional knowledge and skills

- Demonstrate evidence of updating own knowledge and skill base in the light of new and emerging evidence in palliative care.

Population health and the context of general practice

- Describe the demographics of terminal illness especially in relation to nonmalignant conditions.
- Demonstrate commitment to forging and maintaining relationships with other community palliative care service providers to provide equity of access on the basis of need.
- Describe and implement, where appropriate, policies and standards for palliative care, eg. *Standards quality palliative care for all Australians*.²⁵

Professional and ethical role

- Demonstrate planning on how to undertake ongoing professional development in relation to identified palliative care knowledge gaps.

Organisational and legal dimensions

- Demonstrate the ability to identify gaps in own knowledge, skills, and attitudes in relation to evidence based palliative care.
- Outline practice financial aspects and time management issues related to effective palliative care general practice service provision.
- Undertake regular audits of management practices in dealing with palliative care patients and their families/carers.