

Project Title	Audit of quality of deaths in the Canberra Hospital
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Outline of the project

As outlined by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission), the health care that people receive in the last years, months and weeks of their lives can minimise the distress and grief associated with death and dying for the individual, and their family, friends and carers.(1) However, many acute hospitals are often focused on diagnosis and treatment with a view to cure a patient, this leading to those approaching the end of their life and in need of end of life interventions such as conversations about their goals of care, a palliative approach to care, or provision of terminal care – can be delayed or not occur. This delay can result in a level of care and communication that contributes to less than optimal end-of-life care (1). Any conclusions around this in the ACT are however anecdotal due to the lack of data collected on how end-of-life care is delivered in the ACT.

As a means of improving care at the end of life, in 2015 the Commission developed a *National consensus statement: essential elements for safe and high-quality end-of-life care* (Consensus Statement).(2) The Consensus Statement sets out suggested practice for end-of-life care in settings where acute care is provided and focuses on core processes of care and organisational prerequisites for delivering high-quality end-of-life care. One of the elements within the Consensus Statement relates to evaluation, audit and feedback. The implementing of the Consensus Statement is now included as part of the National Quality and Safety Health Services Standards (second edition) and which health services will be audited against in further accreditations.

To assist health services, The Commission have developed an End of Life Care audit tool to analyse the practice of end of life care as recorded in the patient records of those who have died in health settings. It is recommended that jurisdictions audit 200 deaths using this tool to analyse trends, gaps and areas for improvement. Alongside of this, the Health Round Table are promoting jurisdictions audit the quality of care through conducting the Canterbury Quality of Death Audit tool on 20 deaths at the same time as any Commission audit underway. The tool collects quality of death indicators including symptom management and also assigns a score.

There is also a complimentary staff survey which will be used to complete the picture.

However this will not be part of the student placement.

The student will be participating in the audit of Canberra Hospital records for deaths (excluding maternal and mental health patient deaths) utilising the two audit tools above. The student will be required in conjunction with the supervisor to analyse themes that arise from the audit of cases and prepare recommendations in the form of a report for Canberra Health Services Executive. The student will also be asked to identify challenges that may arise in using the tools to feed back into national development work on audit tools in palliative care.

Ethics will be required to be sought for this project, and will be undertaken prior to the student commencing.

- (1) Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care. Summary report: Results of pilot of end-of-life care audit and survey tools. Sydney: ACSQHC; 2016.
- (2) Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care. National consensus statement: essential elements for safe and high-quality end-of-life care. Sydney: ACSQHC, 2015.

Preferred study discipline being undertaken by the student

Any discipline

Potential benefits to the student and to the department

Student:

- Develop research and analysis skills
- Gain an understanding of ACT Health record keeping
- Participate in audit tool analysis
- Develop knowledge of end of life care and quality of death for further application in clinical settings

Canberra Health Services:

- Data collection and analysis of data on end of life care and quality of death in the Canberra Hospital.
- Recommendations to inform the development of an End of Life Care work plan.

Department within ACT Health where the student will be based

Cancer, Ambulatory and Community Health Support

Please submit form to preclinical.research@act.gov.au