

# ***Palliative care information for patients, carers, families & the general public***

The Australian Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration (PCOC) provides information for patients, carers, families, the general public, clinicians and researchers on palliative care.

## **Evidence for palliative care**

PCOC is the national evidence hub on patients' daily pain and symptom outcomes in Australia. We have routine information on more than 250,000 patients (and families and carers) who have received specialist palliative care over the last decade.

## **How many people receive palliative care?**

There are around 100,000 predictable deaths per year in Australia. Of those, 40,000 patients receive specialist palliative care and 60,000 do not. Patients may receive palliative care for years, months, weeks or days before death. Palliative care is highly effective for those patients who receive it.

## **Common symptoms and problems**

Palliative care clinicians use standardised patient and family / carer assessment tools to assess and respond to each patient's needs. PCOC measures outcomes for pain, physical symptoms, psychological-spiritual needs, as well as family and carer outcomes. We also measure outcomes for patients as they move between home and hospital. Fatigue is the most common symptom.

The most common reason for going to hospital for palliative care is when symptoms and problems develop that can't be managed at home.

## **What are the experiences of patients in their last few days of life?**

Over 80% of patients receiving palliative care do not have severe symptoms at the time of death. Only a small proportion experience severe symptoms and evidence shows these symptoms either become absent or mild as death approaches. When patients are referred to palliative care 9% experience severe pain but this reduces to approximately 2% prior to death. Patients in their final days and hours receiving palliative care experience less pain, symptoms and problems than earlier in their illness.

## **How is PCOC information used?**

Clinicians use the information PCOC produces to measure the effectiveness of the care they provide and to continually improve the palliative care provided to patients and their families.

Contact us on 02 4221 5092 or visit our website [www.pcoc.org.au](http://www.pcoc.org.au)