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RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND CLINICAL SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY ON POLICY IMPACTS

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Aim: To discuss the impact on policy development of the palliative care approach resulting from the review of consumer case studies. Religion and Spirituality are not always mutually exclusive and this case study analysis focuses on the impact of care delivery, clinical symptom management and the associated implications to policy frameworks.

Methodology: The Salvation Army Aged Care Plus reviewed numerous case studies associated with consumers who expressed strong religious ideology with at times conflicting spirituality needs of loved ones who were ultimately decision makers during the terminal phase of care. These case studies resulted in numerous policy impacts on the delivery of palliative care services which focussed on meeting the individual consumer needs and provision of contemporary clinical management.

Findings: The understanding of religious practice and theology coupled with consumer and consumer representative's lived experience of spirituality has a significant impact on the psychological and spiritual wellbeing during end of life care. An understanding of synergies and dichotomies are essential from a policy perspective to ensure appropriate clinical care provision is holistic and person centred. The effective integration of the psychological and spiritual needs associated with religion and spiritual awareness / practice results in improved care outcomes.

Biography

Craig O'Malley is a Registered Nurse who has worked a variety of roles across the nursing and education sector. For the past 5 years Craig has been the Centre Manager of an 83 bed Residential Aged Care Facility in NSW Australia. A deep understanding of the aged care sector has come from Craig's progression in the industry from a Care Worker, Enrolled Nurse, Registered Nurse and Nurse Educator. Previously Craig has spent 10 years in the acute sector as a Clinical Nurse Specialist (surgical) and 3 years as a Clinical Facilitator and Lecturer for North Coast TAFE & University of Newcastle. Craig holds a Bachelor of Nursing and Certificate in Training & Assessment.

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