

Monash Health

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Integrating patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs) into supportive and palliative care to facilitate high-quality, pro-active patient-centred supportive care that improves the well-being and support for patients with advanced cancer

Palliative care is a holistic discipline for people with incurable illnesses, encompassing physical, psychological, social and spiritual care for patients and their carers. The Supportive and Palliative Care Unit (SPCU) at Monash Health offers complex symptom management in patients with advanced cancer.

Palliative care occurs across multiple settings. The SPCU has recently implemented several virtual clinics allowing clinical services to operate without competing for scarce clinic space and providing services to a greater number of patients at an increased frequency. Virtual clinics allow patients to attend appointments who are unable to attend physically and they permit informal, as-needed access to the clinical team between scheduled appointments via the SPCU Outreach Palliative Care team (RAPID).

Patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs) are validated surveys (meaning they're dependable) for measuring patient symptoms and psychosocial well-being. Measuring patient-reported outcomes (PROs) can guide clinicians to address the most pressing issues of concern for patients. PROs can also open a dialogue between patients (and their carers) and clinicians promoting shared decision-making. For Australians with cancer, PROs are commonly clinically utilised in many settings such as oncology clinics and wards as well as by community palliative care services, yet patients under tertiary-run palliative care services miss out.

Implementing PROMs in the routine care of SPCU will facilitate proactive patient-initiated and driven care by detecting potential clinical problems early. No palliative care unit in Australia has implemented real-time outpatient PROs to drive care that is pro-active, patient-initiated and patient-centred.

Our solution is to implement patient-initiated electronic capture of PROs so that patients;

- are in control of their care;
- have reduced distress;
- communicate what is happening with them and;
- avoid unplanned emergency or hospital presentations.