



PalliativeCare
AUSTRALIA

Media Release

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Patient choice key to a good death

Patient wishes must be taken into account to ensure quality end of life care, with Australians reporting that choice about where to die and adequate pain management are key issues that determine the quality of care received.

A Palliative Care Australia (PCA) survey of 1000 Australians who had lost a friend or family member from a long-term illness since 2010 asked respondents about their satisfaction with the care their family member received.

PCA President Professor Patsy Yates said it was fantastic that most report their loved ones had a chance to die well.

“Almost 70% said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the standard of care, which reflects well on our health and community services. However, almost a third (31%) of Australians were ambivalent about or unhappy with their loved one’s care and that is a number we need to address. That would translate to about 50,000 Australians each year who feel they did not receive satisfactory care .*

“Of those who identified problems with the care their loved ones received women were most concerned about patients choosing where they die (26%), while men raised pain management as an issue (27%).

“PCA is encouraging Australians to have the difficult conversation about end of life care and what they want to happen to them. It is a challenging, but really necessary talk that will mean your family can advocate for the death you want when your time comes.

“We should also take that conversation beyond medical issues alone. Where do you hope to be when you die, who do you want with you, what will give you comfort?

“These conversations are part of the care that palliative care provides. It is care that looks after the whole self – the physical and the mental, while also caring for the grieving family. In National Palliative Care Week it is also important to remember that palliative care can be accessed by people who are suffering from a range of conditions, not just cancer, and it can help them to live well through a long illness.

“Our survey also illustrated a generation gap when it came to concern about care. Younger people were more likely to be unhappy with the care their loved one received, with more than half saying they were not satisfied with care.

“The 18-24 year olds were also most likely (11.6%) to be not very satisfied with care, the highest number in any age group. This might reflect changing expectations of health professionals, with older Australians still more likely to defer to a medical professional.

“All Australians will be touched by death, as a friend as a family member and as a member of a community – we owe to all Australians to help them achieve the best death possible,” Professor Yates said.

*based on ABS statistics 2013 147,678 deaths in Australia

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National Palliative Care Week: Sunday 24 May – Saturday 30 May - Palliativecare.org.au



What was the main element of your friend or family members care that concerned you?	OVERALL	Male	Female	18-24 years old	25-34 years old	35-44 years old	45-54 years old	55-64 years old	65+ years old
The attitude of carers	11.9%	9.6%	13.5%	20.5%	12.3%	9.1%	7.4%	11.4%	13.2%
They were not able to die in their place of choice	25.0%	23.7%	25.9%	11.4%	24.6%	26.0%	20.4%	28.6%	37.7%
The effectiveness of pain relief	23.8%	26.7%	21.6%	36.4%	21.1%	20.8%	27.8%	17.1%	20.8%
The conditions of the facility	9.7%	11.9%	8.1%	6.8%	10.5%	11.7%	16.7%	5.7%	3.8%
The level of attention from doctors and nurses	21.3%	17.0%	24.3%	13.6%	19.3%	26.0%	20.4%	31.4%	17.0%
Flexible visiting hours to allow family to be with them	8.4%	11.1%	6.5%	11.4%	12.3%	6.5%	7.4%	5.7%	7.5%

How satisfied were you with the quality of care received at the end of their life?	OVERALL	Male	Female	18-24 years old	25-34 years old	35-44 years old	45-54 years old	55-64 years old	65+ years old
Very satisfied	26.9%	27.5%	26.3%	11.6%	16.1%	21.1%	31.7%	33.8%	37.9%
Satisfied	41.3%	45.0%	37.7%	37.2%	50.0%	40.2%	39.7%	43.9%	36.4%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	22.4%	20.2%	24.5%	37.2%	26.8%	28.6%	18.5%	13.4%	17.0%
Not very satisfied	6.5%	4.9%	8.0%	11.6%	4.2%	6.0%	6.9%	7.0%	5.8%
Not at all satisfied	3.0%	2.4%	3.5%	2.3%	3.0%	4.0%	3.2%	1.9%	2.9%