



Media Release

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Social media – breaking down palliative care barriers

Social media breaks down barriers between patients and clinicians and is a great way to engage the community in a discussion about palliative care says Dr Elissa Campbell who was recently nominated for the Inaugural Palliative Care Australia National emerging leader award.

Dr Campbell, a palliative care and geriatric medicine registrar in Western Australia, is using social media and a blog she helped create to spread the word about palliative care.

“Social media can help us get the message across to the broader community of what palliative care is and how it can benefit people; that can only be a good thing. Then more will be requesting it for themselves and family members when they need it.

“I feel we have a really amazing product in palliative care and we’re not doing as good a job as we could do of selling it.

“When I meet people and say I work in palliative care I get two responses. People either share an experience of palliative care with a family member, that is always overwhelmingly positive, or they say ‘what’s that’? I recently travelled with an anaesthetist friend, she doesn’t get that response. No one wants to talk passionately about their wonderful anaesthetic experience,” she said.

Tomorrow is World Hospice and Palliative Care Day, Dr Campbell has been involved in a tweetchat with Australian and New Zealand counterparts encouraging the community to talk about diversity in palliative care.

World Day is recognising hidden lives/hidden patients, and the difficulty some people have in accessing palliative care – including diverse communities such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people, linguistically diverse populations and children.

Palliative Care Australia CEO Liz Callaghan says the organisation is getting involved in tweetchats as a way to raise awareness of palliative care to a broader audience.

“We have Facebook and Twitter and they both reach certain parts of the community, but we want palliative care to have the same profile as mental health or depression has now – we want people to talk about it like it’s a normal part of life. Because it is. Social media is one way of doing that.”

Dr Campbell says using social media is a great leveller and has given her opportunities to connect with consumers and specialists from other disciplines to teach them more about palliative care.

“It gives such a great perspective that we often don’t get to see as clinicians, that isn’t shared with us and it really validates what we do in palliative care, especially when acting as an advocate for a patient,” she said.

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