

Palliative care at a glance in South Australia web report

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The Australian Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration (PCOC) is a national palliative care outcomes and benchmarking program. PCOC's primary objective is to systematically improve patient outcomes (including pain and symptom control).

Central to the program is a framework and protocol for routine clinical assessment and response. This works in parallel with a routine point-of-care data collection, capturing clinically meaningful information. PCOC aims to drive improvement in patient outcomes through feedback to individual services and by facilitating service-to-service benchmarking.

Three types of information are presented in this web report: patient-level, episode-level and phase-level information#. This web report includes data for the period of 2017 and 2018. The information reported here includes data from participating services during the stated time periods. The report represents a substantial proportion of palliative care provision within South Australia.

For more information regarding the data included in this report, please contact us at pcoc@uow.edu.au

South Australia services, patients, episodes of care, and phases, 2018#

	N
Services	9
Patients	3,391
Episodes of care#	4,914
<i>Hospital / hospice episodes</i>	<i>1,879</i>
<i>Community episodes</i>	<i>3,035</i>
Phases	9,708
<i>Hospital / hospice phases</i>	<i>4,240</i>
<i>Community phases</i>	<i>5,468</i>

Number of phases by palliative care phase type and setting, 2018#

Palliative care phase	Hospital / hospice		Community		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Stable	936	22.1	2,194	40.1	3,130	32.2
Unstable	535	12.6	765	14.0	1,300	13.4
Deteriorating	1,773	41.8	2,069	37.8	3,842	39.6
Terminal	996	23.5	440	8.0	1,436	14.8
Total	4,240	100.0	5,468	100.0	9,708	100.0

PCOC defines a patient as a person for whom a palliative care service accepts responsibility for assessment and / or treatment as evidenced by the existence of a medical record. Family and carers are included in this definition if interventions relating to them are recorded in the patient medical record. An episode of care is a period of contact between a patient and a palliative care service that is provided by one palliative care service and occurs in one setting – for the purposes of this report, either as a hospital / hospice or community patient. The palliative care phase type describes the stage of the patient's illness and provides a clinical indication of the level of care a patient requires. Patients may have more than one episode of care, and phase.

14,274 people died in South Australia in 2017. Of these, 1,484 deaths (10.4%) were captured in the PCOC data collection. Of all deaths in South Australia, 8,445 (59.2%) could be considered potentially predictable. The PCOC deaths represented 17.6% of all deaths considered predictable, and 32.5% of deaths from causes typically seen by specialist palliative care. Population-based estimates indicate that in high-income countries, 69%–82% of those who die need palliative care.

South Australia death data, predictable deaths, proportion of predictable deaths captured in PCOC and specialist palliative care, 2017

Summary	2017
South Australia deaths	14,274
Potentially predictable	8,445
Potentially specialist palliative care	4,564
Deaths in hospital#	6,137
Deaths recorded in PCOC	1,484
South Australia deaths	100.0
	%
Potentially predictable	59.2%
Potentially specialist palliative care	32.0%
Deaths in hospital	43.0%
Deaths recorded in PCOC as % of total	10.4%
Deaths recorded in PCOC as % of potentially predictable	17.6%
Deaths recorded in PCOC as % of potentially specialist palliative care	32.5%

Sources:

Rosenwax, L.K., McNamara, B., Blackmore, A.M. & Holman, C.D.J. 2005, 'Estimating the size of a potential palliative care population', *Palliative Medicine*, vol. 19, no. 7, pp. 556–62.

Murtagh, F.E.M., Bausewein, C., Verne, J., Iris Groeneveld, E., Kaloki, Y.E. & Higginson, I.J. 2014, 'How many people need palliative care? A study developing and comparing methods for population-based estimates', *Palliative Medicine*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 49–58.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Causes of Death, Australia, 2017*. Cat. No. 3303.0

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018. *Admitted patient care 2016–17: Australian hospital statistics*. Health services series no. 84. Cat. no. HSE 201. Canberra: AIHW.

PLEASE NOTE: Deaths in hospital corresponds to the 2016-17 financial year

Table 1 Severe symptoms at beginning of episode-of-care and just before death, South Australia, 2018

	All palliative care			Hospital / hospice			Community		
	N	Beginning	Just before death	N	Beginning	Just before death	N	Beginning	Just before death
Fatigue	1,101	7.1%	6.2%	765	7.8%	4.8%	336	5.4%	9.2%
Pain	1,098	4.9%	1.5%	764	5.8%	1.6%	334	3.0%	1.5%
Appetite	1,095	3.5%	2.2%	762	3.8%	2.4%	333	2.7%	1.8%
Breathing	1,099	3.5%	2.8%	763	4.2%	3.1%	336	2.1%	2.1%
Bowel problems	1,098	3.0%	1.7%	763	3.1%	1.7%	335	2.7%	1.8%
Insomnia	1,096	3.1%	0.8%	760	3.7%	0.7%	336	1.8%	1.2%
Nausea	1,102	1.8%	0.7%	764	2.1%	1.0%	338	1.2%	0.0%

The assessment framework incorporates five validated clinical assessment tools: Palliative Care Phase; Palliative Care Problem Severity Score (PCPSS); Symptom Assessment Scale (SAS); Australia-modified Karnofsky Performance Status (AKPS) scale and Resource Utilisation Groups – Activities of Daily Living (RUG-ADL).

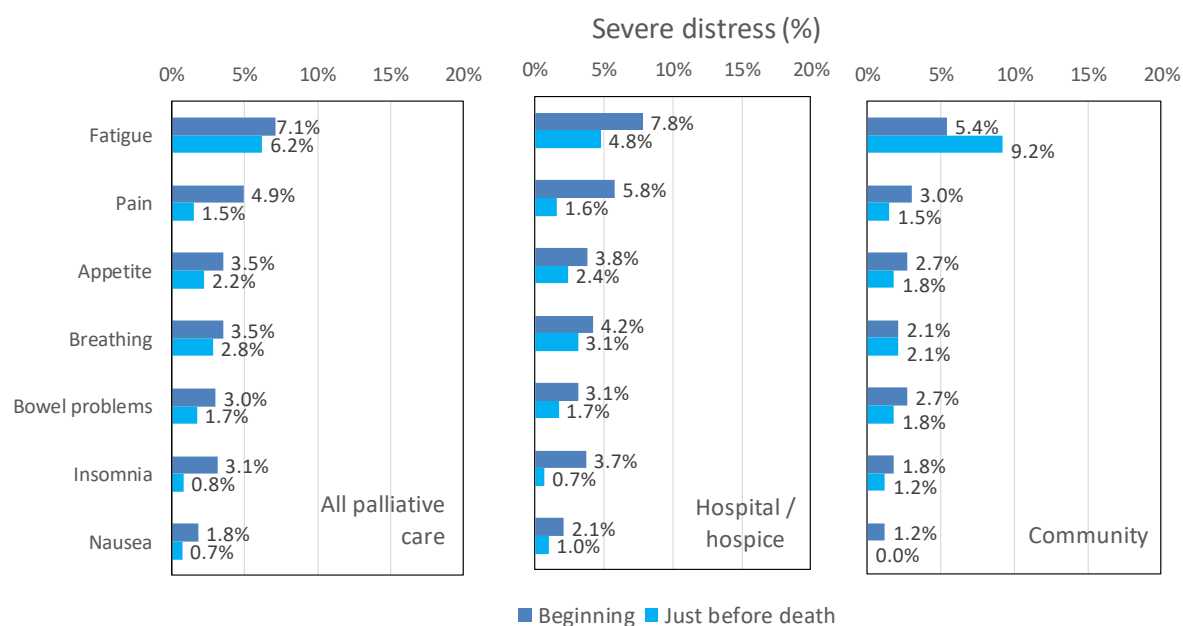


Table 2 Patient's preferred language, South Australia, 2018

Language	Palliative care patients	
	N	%
English	3,117	94.3
All other languages	189	5.7
Total	3,306	100.0

Table 3 Country of birth of palliative care patients, South Australia, 2018

Country of birth	Palliative care patients	
	N	%
Australia	2,031	66.2
England	363	11.8
Italy	100	3.3
Greece	64	2.1
All other countries	508	16.6
Total	3,066	100.0

Table 4 Cancer and non-cancer diagnosis reported in PCOC, South Australia, 2018

Diagnosis	Palliative care patients	
	N	%
Cancer	2,839	84.1
Non-cancer	535	15.9
Total	3,374	100.0



Table 5 Palliative care patients by remoteness, South Australia, 2018

	Patients receiving care in hospital / hospice		Patients receiving care in the community		Total patients	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Remoteness						
Major cities	1,176	73.9	1,562	63.8	2,299	67.9
Inner regional	136	8.5	438	17.9	512	15.1
Outer regional, remote and very remote#	279	17.6	447	18.3	574	17.0
Total	1,591	100.0	2,447	100.0	3,385	100.0

These cells have been combined due to small numbers in the remote and very remote categories.

Note: If a patient receives care in more than one setting, they are only presented once in the 'Total patients' column.

Remoteness classification reference: <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/remoteness+structure>

Table 6 Palliative care patients, by Indigenous status, South Australia, 2018

Indigenous status	N	%
Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander	63	2.0
Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander	3,102	98.0
Total	3,165	100.0



Table 7 Palliative care episodes by socioeconomic status, South Australia, 2018

IRSAD quintile	Hospital / hospice		Community		Total		South Australia population#
	N	%	N	%	N	%	%
1 (Lowest)	643	34.3	1,203	39.7	1,846	37.6	25.7
2	303	16.2	512	16.9	815	16.6	25.1
3	405	21.6	643	21.2	1,048	21.4	22.4
4	337	18.0	412	13.6	749	15.3	17.9
5 (Highest)	185	9.9	263	8.7	448	9.1	8.9
Total	1,873	100.0	3,033	100.0	4,906	100.0	100.0

South Australia population information obtained from <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2071.0~2016~Main%20Features~Socio-Economic%20Advantage%20and%20Disadvantage-123>

Table 8 Palliative care episodes by age group and setting, South Australia, 2018

	Hospital / hospice		Community		Total South Australia	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Age group (years)						
< 25	1	0.1	8	0.3	9	0.2
25-64	549	29.2	758	25.0	1,307	26.6
65-84	998	53.1	1,715	56.5	2,713	55.2
85+	331	17.6	554	18.3	885	18.0
Total	1,879	100.0	3,035	100.0	4,914	100.0
Average age	71.3	-	72.4	-	72.0	-
Median age	72.0	-	74.0	-	73.0	-

Table 9 Palliative care episodes by sex and setting, South Australia, 2018

Sex	Hospital / hospice		Community		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	988	52.6	1,675	55.2	2,663	54.2
Female	891	47.4	1,360	44.8	2,251	45.8
Total	1,879	100.0	3,035	100.0	4,914	100.0

Table 10 Palliative care episodes by age group and Indigenous status, South Australia, 2018

	Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander		Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander nor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	
	N	%	N	%
Age group (years)				
< 50	15	11.9	237	5.3
50 +	111	88.1	4,252	94.7
Total	126	100.0	4,489	100.0
Average age	62.5	-	72.3	-
Median age	66.5	-	73.0	-

Table 11 Summary of patient outcomes and benchmarks, by setting of palliative care, South Australia, 2018

Outcome measure	Benchmark	All South Australia services	Hospital / hospice setting	Community setting	
Timeliness of care					
Patients commencing an episode of palliative care on the day of, or the day following, the date they were ready for care	90%	92.1%	94.1%	90.6%	
Responding to urgent needs					
Patients in the unstable phase for three days or less	90%	84.8%	93.5%	78.8%	
Anticipatory care					
<i>Patients with absent/mild at the beginning of a phase remaining absent/mild when the phase ends</i>					
Clinician rated	90%	Pain	85.4%	90.3%	80.9%
		Family / carer problems	83.9%	91.8%	75.0%
Patient rated		Pain	84.0%	86.1%	82.0%
		Fatigue	81.7%	84.1%	79.1%
		Breathing problems	92.1%	92.7%	91.5%
Responsive care					
<i>Patients with moderate/severe at the beginning of a phase becoming absent/mild when the phase ends</i>					
Clinician rated	60%	Pain	57.5%	65.7%	51.3%
		Family / carer problems	48.2%	63.9%	42.2%
Patient rated		Pain	52.7%	60.6%	45.4%
		Fatigue	40.8%	55.6%	29.3%
		Breathing problems	42.3%	52.3%	33.2%

SUGGESTED CITATION:

Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration (20 September 2019) Palliative care services at a glance in South Australia, Web Report. Australian Health Services Research Institute, University of Wollongong

The Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration (PCOC) is a national palliative care project funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.