PCOC palliative care outcomes collaboration

What hospital staff told us about early palliative care screening

IMPACS-NSW SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

3	**14**	**62**
NSW hospitals	focus groups and interviews	healthcare professionals

About the project

IMPACS-NSW is helping hospital teams identify people who may benefit from palliative care earlier in their care journey. Earlier recognition can support timely conversations, planning and care.

The focus groups and interviews are part of a research study to better understand how palliative care needs are identified in hospital. The findings will be used to support making palliative care screening part of routine hospital care.

Six main findings

1 Palliative care is often linked to dying

Clinicians often understood palliative care as care given near the end of life.

2 Identification is often informal

Clinicians often rely on experience and judgement rather than a standard screening process.

3 Palliative care needs are not always addressed

Many clinicians described identifying palliative care needs but felt that senior doctors are responsible for decisions.

4 Knowledge and confidence matter

Many clinicians have limited knowledge about palliative care and are uncomfortable talking about it.

5 The process needs clear steps to follow

Clinicians wanted clear guidance on:

- When should screening happen?
- Who should do the screening?
- What should happen after someone is identified as benefiting from palliative care?

6 What helps change happen?

- Staff education
- Clinical leadership and staff champions
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- A screening and response process that fits routine inpatient care
- Ongoing reminders, refresher education and follow-up

What happens next? These findings will inform the design of an implementation framework that supports a way to recognise and address palliative care needs

The University of Wollongong leads IMPACS-NSW in collaboration with: The Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration, Wollongong Hospital, St George Hospital, St Vincent's Hospital Sydney

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