

Title	The importance of massage for the palliative patient
Number	15
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Abstract	<p>The palliative patient is nestled within the cancer survivorship population of over 800,000 people in Australia. This population is defined as anyone who has been diagnosed with cancer, from the time of diagnosis through the balance of their life. Palliative patients have particular needs and regular, classical or deep tissue massage is not appropriate for this patient population. However, massage can fulfil a role by alleviating anxiety experienced in the palliation journey and by bringing safe touch to those needing comfort based care. For palliative patients living in the community; working, caring for loved ones and leading active lives, appropriately adapted massage is able to provide the musculoskeletal support usually associated with this modality. Considerations must be made including the positioning adjustments for patients experiencing breathing difficulty, nausea, pain or have devices inserted. The positioning of the patient is vital to ensure a level of comfort throughout the massage session. Poor communication skills or too light a massage pressure with insufficient whole hand contact can result in the loss of the opportunity for the activation of the relaxation response thus denying the patient the full benefits of massage. With enough suitably trained massage therapists, appropriate massage could be provided throughout wellness centres, palliative care wards, hospices and in the community so that all palliative patients can access the benefits of safe massage.</p>