

Title	Recognising the needs of family members to have choice and preparation to view the body after death
Number	50
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Abstract	<p>Background: Viewing the body after death is assumed to be either helpful or traumatic depending on the cause of death. This paper unpacks findings from a study examining the experience of viewing or not viewing the body for relatives after a sudden and unexpected death to suggest implications for practice and research in palliative care settings. Methods: 64 bereaved relatives undertook semi structured interviews and completed grief questionnaires 7-10 months after a sudden and unexpected death reported to the NSW Coroner. Results: Family members valued viewing finding transformative meanings in doing so. However, many also experienced intrusive images from the viewing. Others regretted not seeing the body and had on-going regret and imagined fantasies of the body. Support in making a self determined choice and having preparation was important in managing the experience. Conclusions: Palliative care recognises the importance of a 'good death' however family members can witness the death, be uncertain about contact with the deceased, or suffer trauma reactions after death. Providing choice and preparing family for viewing may be equally important in palliative care settings as it is in other deaths. Implications for practice and future research are discussed.</p>