

Are WE fit for the future?

Self-care strategies to future-proof compassionate palliative care.

Presented by

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Introduction: *The Self-care Study*

Background

The use of effective self-care strategies is mandated in the national palliative care standards,¹ yet very little is known about the utility or uptake of self-care practices in the Australian palliative care workforce.

Research question:


What self-care strategies are practised by Australian nurses and doctors working in palliative care?

Design


Descriptive cross-sectional survey

Survey platform

Research Electronic Data Capture (REDCap) software



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Recruitment

Survey link distributed via email invitation

To Australian members of:

- *Australian and New Zealand Society for Palliative Medicine (ANZSPM)*
- *Palliative Care Nurses Australia (PCNA)*

The survey link was also sent to palliative care services around Australia.

Eligibility:

Nurse (EN/RN/NP) or medical practitioner (including registrars) working in Australia, with palliative care as their main area of practice.

- *Inclusive of clinical, management, education and research roles.*

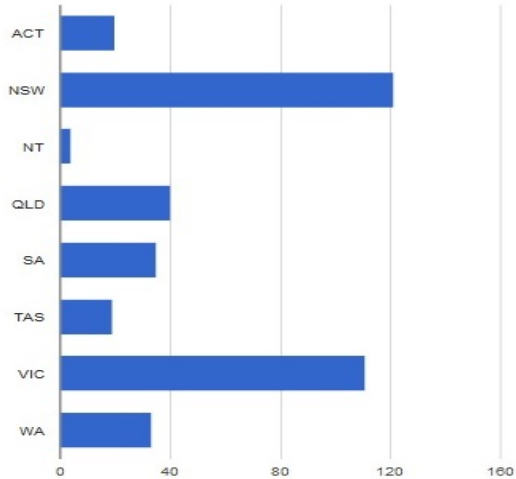
Questionnaire

Demographics; Professional role; Self-care practices

- *How important do you think self-care is for nurses and doctors working in palliative care?*
- *How regularly do you practice self-care strategies during a normal week?*
- *Have you received formal training or education/resources about the use of effective self-care strategies?*
- *Do you use a self-care plan?*
- *List examples of effective self-care strategies that you use*

Results: Demographics

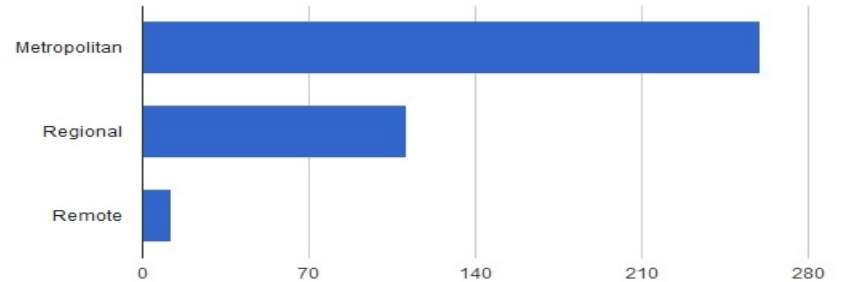
Counts/frequency: ACT (20, 5.2%), NSW (121, 31.6%), NT (4, 1.0%), QLD (40, 10.4%), SA (35, 9.1%), TAS (19, 5.0%), VIC (111, 29.0%), WA (33, 8.6%)



State/Territory location of survey respondents

Geographical Area*

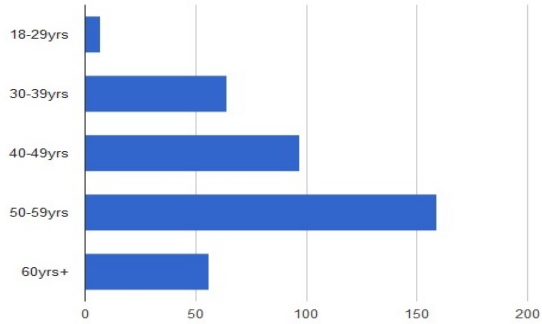
Counts/frequency: Metropolitan (260, 67.9%), Regional (111, 29.0%), Remote (12, 3.1%)



* ABS (2010). *Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) Remoteness Structure*. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra ACT.

Results: *Demographics*

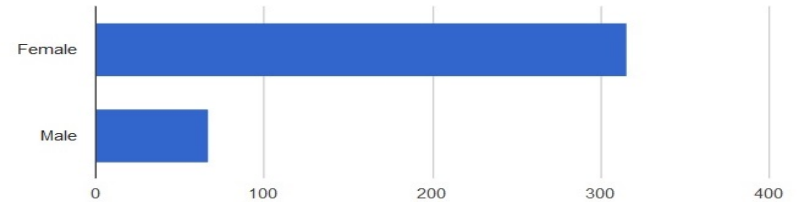
Counts/frequency: 18-29yrs (7, 1.8%), 30-39yrs (64, 16.7%), 40-49yrs (97, 25.3%), 50-59yrs (159, 41.5%), 60yrs+ (56, 14.6%)



Age ranges

Proportion of females to males

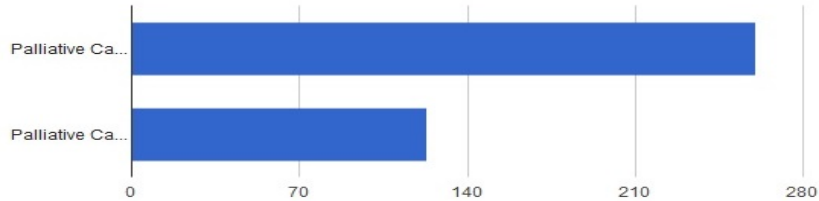
Counts/frequency: Female (316, 82.5%), Male (67, 17.5%)



Results: Discipline and Professional Role

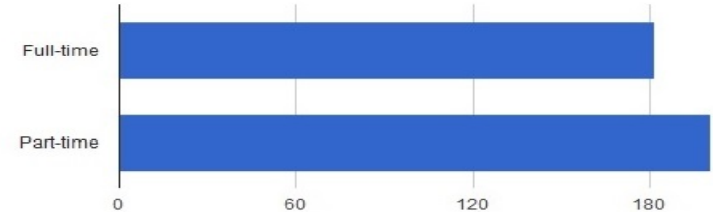
Nurses and Doctors working in Palliative Care

Counts/frequency: Palliative Care Nurse (260, 67.9%), Palliative Care Doctor (123, 32.1%)



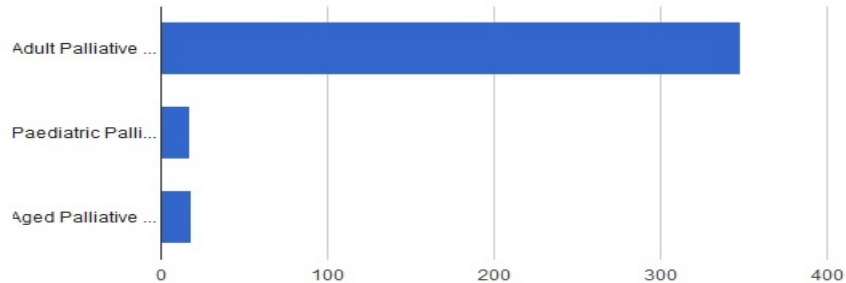
Full-time and Part-time Roles

Counts/frequency: Full-time (182, 47.5%), Part-time (201, 52.5%)



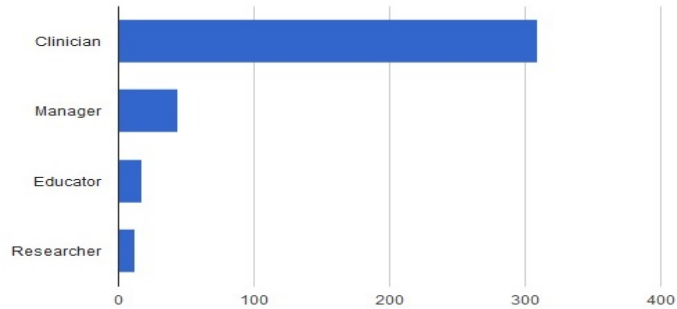
Palliative Care Population focus

Counts/frequency: Adult Palliative Care (348, 90.9%), Paediatric Palliative Care (17, 4.4%), Aged Palliative Care (18, 4.7%)



Results: *Discipline and Professional Role*

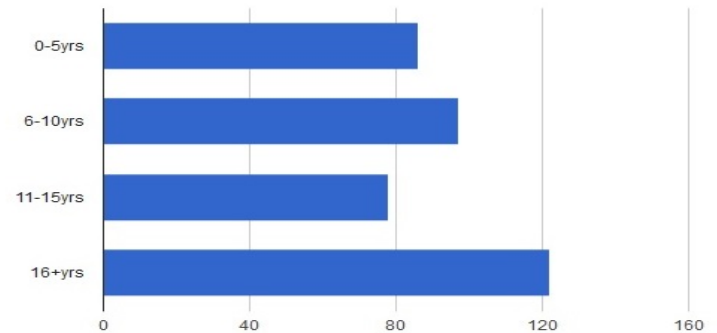
Counts/frequency: Clinician (309, 80.9%), Manager (44, 11.5%), Educator (17, 4.5%), Researcher (12, 3.1%)



Main role in palliative care setting

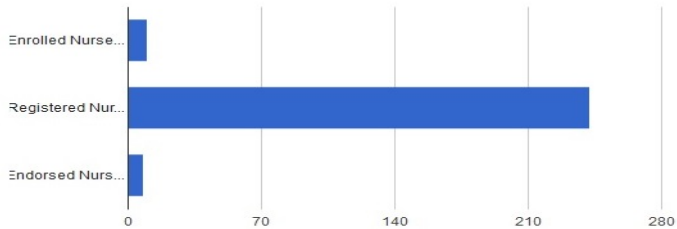
Years experience working in palliative care

Counts/frequency: 0-5yrs (86, 22.5%), 6-10yrs (97, 25.3%), 11-15yrs (78, 20.4%), 16+yrs (122, 31.9%)



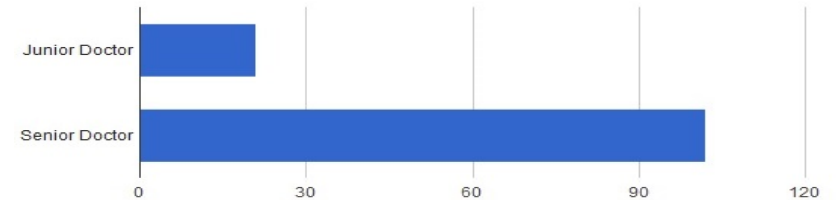
Results: *Discipline and Professional Role*

Counts/frequency: Enrolled Nurse (Div. 2 EN) (10, 3.8%), Registered Nurse (Div. 1 RN) (242, 93.1%), Endorsed Nurse Practitioner (NP) (8, 3.1%)



Enrolled Nurses, Registered Nurses, Endorsed Nurse Practitioners

Counts/frequency: Junior Doctor (21, 17.1%), Senior Doctor (102, 82.9%)

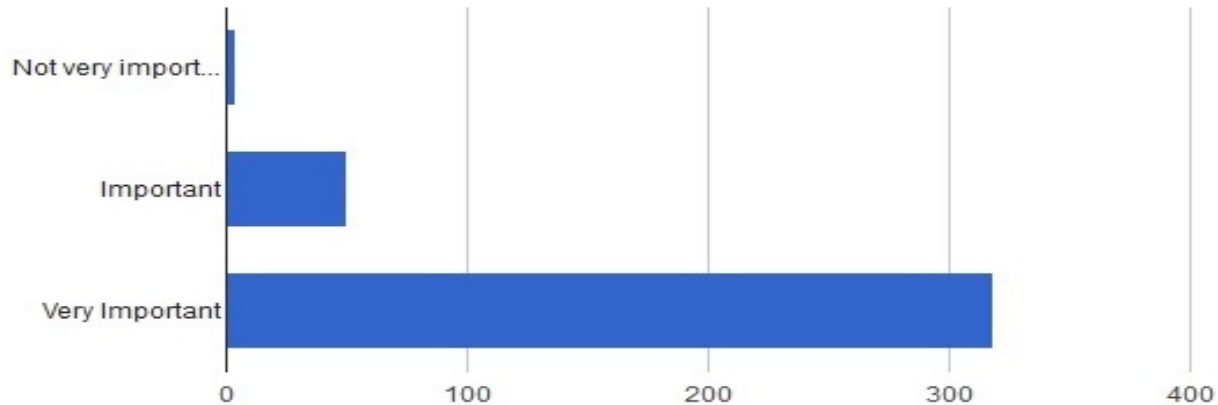


Junior Doctors and Senior Doctors

Results: *Self-care*

How important do you think self-care is for nurses and doctors working in palliative care?

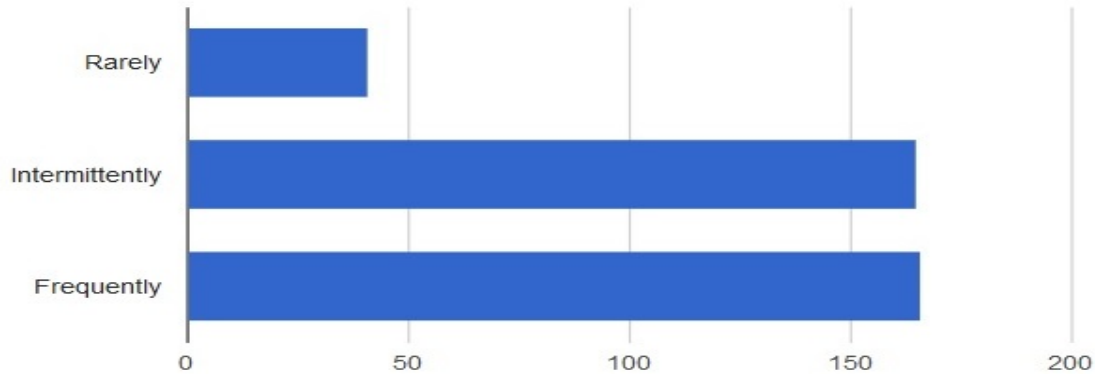
Counts/frequency: Not very important (4, 1.1%), Important (50, 13.4%), Very Important (318, 85.5%)



Results: *Self-care*

How regularly do you practice self-care strategies during a regular week?

Counts/frequency: Rarely (41, 11.0%), Intermittently (165, 44.4%), Frequently (166, 44.6%)



Results: *Self-care*

Have you received specific training or education/resources in your workplace about effective self-care strategies?

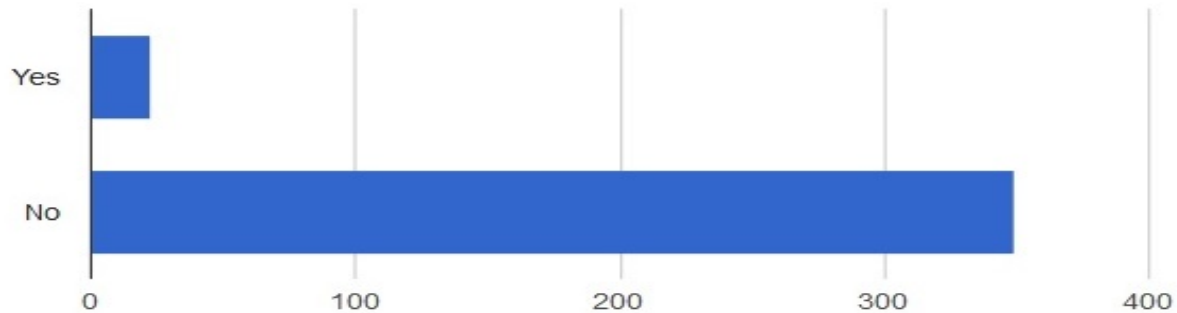
Counts/frequency: Yes (146, 39.2%), No (226, 60.8%)



Results: *Self-care uptake*

Do you use a self-care plan?

Counts/frequency: Yes (23, 6.2%), No (349, 93.8%)

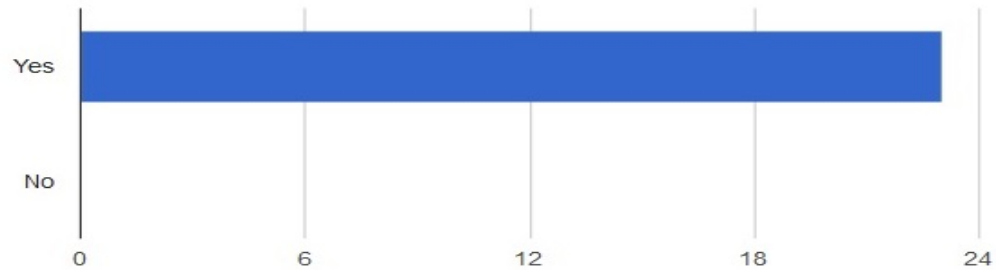


Results: Self-care

For those who DO use a self-care plan:

Do you find it effective?

Counts/frequency: Yes (23, 100.0%), No (0, 0.0%)

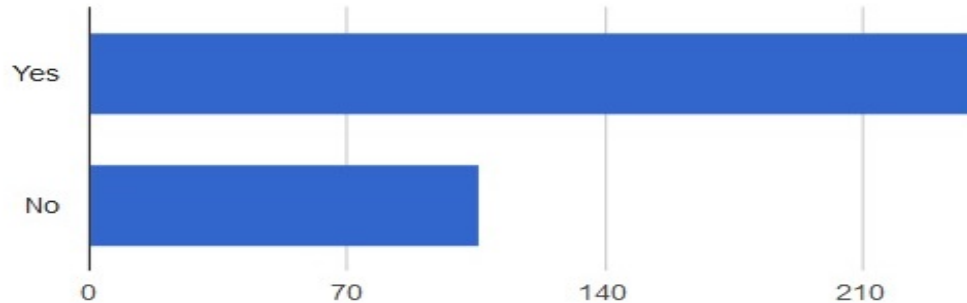


Results: Self-care

For those who DO NOT use a self-care plan:

Would you consider developing a self-care plan, if you were given the time and resources to do it?

Counts/frequency: Yes (243, 69.6%), No (106, 30.4%)



Summary of effective self-care strategies reported

| Personal | Professional |
|---|--|
| <p>Mindfulness, mindless TV, Time alone, socialising with friends, time with pets and family/playing with children, Reading, Journaling, Rituals to switch off work, spending time in nature, hobbies, healthy diet, Coffee, Alcohol, Sex !</p> <p>Yoga, Walking, Jogging, Meditation, Massage, Hydrotherapy/Baths, Exercise, Finding Balance, Prayer, Gratitude, Compassion cultivation practices.</p> | <p>Reflective practice, Informal debriefing, Clinical Supervision, EAP, Attending funerals (if felt needed), Taking meal breaks away from work location (or at least try to take a meal break).</p> <p>Taking regular holidays, taking sick leave when unwell, switching work phone off at home, “saying ‘no’ and not feeling guilty about it” !</p> |

Self-care Domains

Saakvitne and Pearlman⁶ previously identified 6 domains of self-care and these are used in the 'Self-care Assessment Worksheet'.

- **Physical**
- **Psychological**
- **Emotional**
- **Spiritual**
- **Workplace**
- **Balance**

Each of these domains were reflected in the variety of self-care strategies reported by the participants.

Not simply a task list – but a way of being?

“For me self-care is not about what I do, it is about how I am with myself in all that I do. It's actually about love (not in the emotional sense, but the true sense of what love is).

My focus is on my quality of being through listening and being more aware... I do exercise regularly, I eat amazingly well, I rest deeply and I love knowing that I bring everything that I need to my patients simply because it's me bringing it first.”

Conclusion

- These results highlight the importance of self-care for palliative care nurses and doctors in Australia.
- Nearly all respondents regarded self-care as important to their palliative care practice.
- A broad variety of self-care strategies were reported. Uptake of self-care planning was low, but most respondents reported they would consider using self-care plans if supported to do so.

What next?

- Statistical analysis of correlation between the variables of self-compassion and compassion for others
- Complete interview data collection and analysis prior to triangulation

Questions?

Thank you to all the nurses and doctors who generously participated in this survey.

For any nurses interested in further reading on self-care and self-compassion:

Mills, J., Wand, T., & Fraser, J.A. (2015). On self-compassion and self-care in nursing: Selfish or essential for compassionate care? *Int J Nurs Stud.* 52(4), 791-3.

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