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Conference Abstract

The Virtual Hospice: a working, integrated end-of-life care programme

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Abstract

The Virtual Hospice is a working integrated end-of-life care programme, in development, for the people of Maitland, NSW, Australia.

It was 'built' in response to

1. the inequity and inconsistency in the provision of palliative care for people dying at home, in hospital, and in aged care facilities;
2. the apparent disconnectedness experienced by individuals living, working, and dying in our local community; and
3. the ever increasing medicalization of death and dying in Australian society.

Rather than build a hospice out of bricks and mortar, The Virtual Hospice has been founded upon interconnected relationships; maintained by a series of person-centred tools, experiential learning programmes, and community events; and tended by an ethos of compassion and respect.

Integration within The Virtual Hospice occurs across geographical locales (homes, aged care facilities and hospital); between all people involved in end-of-life care (patients, caregivers, palliative care staff, health care professionals and the community); and at the interpersonal level (reconciling and acknowledging that death and dying melds fittingly with life and living).

The Virtual Hospice works as an agile coordinated organisation, aiming to achieve excellent, affordable, consistent, personalised and compassionate end-of-life care.

Over the past five years more than 850 patients have been supported; more than 50% of those dying have died out of hospital; and more than 90 health care professionals have been trained, (and continue to be mentored) to deliver palliation in their place of work.

As The Virtual Hospice involves transforming the healthcare *culture* around care for the dying, it is both transferable to other geographical settings and adaptable to other aspects of health care.

Keywords

end-of-life; programme; culture; equity

PowerPoint presentation

https://www.conftool.net/integratedcare2014/index.php?page=downloadPaper&form_id=141
