Author's response to reviews

Title: Family meetings in palliative care: multidisciplinary clinical practice guidelines

Authors:

Peter Hudson (peterh@medstv.unimelb.edu.au)
Karen Quinn (karen.quinn@svhm.org.au)
Brendon O'Hanlon (b.o'hanlon@latrobe.edu.au)
Sanchia Aranda (sanchiaa@unimelb.edu.au)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr Norton

**Re: Revised manuscript “Family meetings in palliative care: multidisciplinary clinical practice guidelines”**

Thank you for forwarding the reviewers’ feedback. As requested, a revised manuscript has been submitted. In addition, we have outlined below our responses to recommendations raised by the reviewers.

**Reviewer # 1 (BF)**
1. Revised as requested
2. Revised as requested
3. Additional authors/articles reviewed as suggested
4. The forms were designed for clinical use and their size has been reduced for the purposes of publication of the manuscript. If clinicians choose to adopt the content they can readily add more space when they develop their own versions.

**Reviewer #2 (RC)**
1. Comment only (ie no revision requested)
2. Revised as requested
3. The purpose of the literature review (not a systematic review) was to confirm our conception (raised in the introduction) that minimal research re family meetings in palliative care exists and to use the available evidence to support the development of the guidelines. Hence, we would prefer to leave the introduction as it is. Furthermore, the introduction provides the background and justification for the study.
4. Revised as requested
5. Revised as requested
6. ‘Critical care’ setting reviews related to family meetings are already included in the original manuscript however additional papers as highlighted by reviewer #1 have now been cited.
7. Comment only (ie no revision requested)
8. We believe this issue is adequately addressed in the actual guidelines section (refer Box 1 point 1d and 2c). However, we have now referred to the recommended additional reference in the literature review section.
9. Revised as requested
Reviewer # 3 (BA)

1. Comment only (ie no revision requested)
2. The literature cited was in accordance with the search strategy as specifically outlined. Nonetheless, several of the additional articles suggested are now referred to. Searching the ‘grey literature’ is a reasonable suggestion in many circumstances although this is not an essential requirement for a literature review and we deliberately did not go down this path: we wanted to seek out evidence based studies and consequently chose to limit the search to published work.
3. The literature review has been restructured to enhance clarity.
4. The justification for selecting the chosen conceptual models is now included along with a more explicit link to the family meeting guidelines. Some additional information to describe the models has been included. However, adding even more detail, would impact upon word limitations and would detract from the focus of the paper (which is to outline the guideline development process and present the actual guidelines) and moreover there are references to key works if readers want more detail about the models.
5. Revised as requested
6. The relevance of the content of the boxes (eg box 4) are referred to in the actual guidelines (and the guiding principles section) and were included as part of the guideline development process. We believe that the headings (eg goals, action etc in Box 5) are self explanatory.
7. Strength, limitations and suggestions for further research are now outlined as requested.
8. We have now been more explicit about the multidisciplinary approach to determining who (ie which health care discipline) should actually conduct the family meeting.

This reviewer also outlined an additional 35 specific suggestions which have all been considered and where pertinent (in the majority of circumstances) revisions were made as requested.

Reviewer # 4 (SP)

No changes or improvements to content required according to this reviewer.

We are pleased that three of the reviewers assessed our manuscript as important to the field and one reviewer considered it to be outstanding. We believe that the revisions made in accordance with the reviewers’ recommendations have enhanced the quality of this manuscript. Thank you for considering our revised manuscript.

Yours sincerely

Dr Peter Hudson
Director
Centre for Palliative Care Education & Research
St Vincent’s and The University of Melbourne