

Media release

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Australia's only pharmacy practice standard for palliative care now available

Australia's only Standard of Practice in Palliative Care for Pharmacy Services has been released by the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA).

The [Standard of Practice in Palliative Care for Pharmacy Services](#) is now available in the *Journal of Pharmacy Practice and Research (JPPR)*, Australia's leading scientific pharmacy journal, through Early View.

Lead author Josephine To, Chair of SHPA's Palliative Care Leadership Committee, says there is an increasing demand for palliative care services in Australia.

'Demand for palliative care services will only grow due to the disease burden and multimorbidity associated with an ageing Australian population. This care may occur under specialist palliative care, but a palliative approach to care can occur under any specialty. And the quality of services provided to a dying patient is often dependent on effective collaboration between healthcare providers, including pharmacists.

'Pharmacists perform many roles within and outside of the palliative care service that contribute to the health goals of the dying patient.

'Several studies have shown, for example, that pharmacist involvement in a patient's journey decreases the pain intensity experienced by patients.

'When part of a multidisciplinary team, pharmacists have an even greater impact. One study has shown that doctors accepted approximately 90% of pharmacists' recommendations such as a dose or medication change or medication initiation or cessation.

'Effective interdisciplinary medication management involving pharmacists can relieve suffering, mitigate risks or prevent harms, and bring comfort to patients who are dying and their carers.'

SHPA President Tom Simpson says it is timely to announce the availability of this important standard during [National Palliative Care Week](#), to show how pharmacists, alongside many health professionals, are at the heart of quality palliative and end of life care.

'I would like to acknowledge Josephine To and everyone working as part of SHPA's Palliative Care Standard of Practice Working Group for their commitment in making this critical update available to ensure more Australians can receive quality end of life care.

'Josephine and her team's passion to optimise quality of care and quality of life speaks to the dedication of palliative care pharmacists.

'I would also like to extend thanks to the many organisations who supported the review process including Palliative Care Australia, Royal Australasian College of Physicians, Consumers Health Forum of Australia, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia.

'Access to quality palliative care is a [basic human right](#) and it is only through such standards that we can make this access possible for patients diagnosed with a life limiting illness.

'Palliative care can be equally beneficial for patients first diagnosed with a life-limiting condition and for patients with active, progressive, advanced disease, not just cancer with little to no prospect of cure.'

The *Standard of Practice in Palliative Care for Pharmacy Services* is now available in Early View and will feature in the June issue of *JPPR* which is [free – as always – for SHPA members](#). A supporting [CPD accredited Webinar](#) will also take place on Wednesday 26 June outlining key features of, and processes involved in the development of the Standard and is relevant to every pharmacy practitioner involved in palliative care.

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional organisation for the 6,100+ Hospital Pharmacists, and their Hospital Pharmacist Intern and Hospital Pharmacy Technician colleagues working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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