Asking questions that matter

You are just back to work on your medical unit after vacation days and are surprised to find that the team is preparing Mrs Ella Westfall to return home with her husband, Al. She has been in hospital three times over the past 6 months with exacerbations of her COPD, and you wondered if she would still be alive when you returned for work. Frail and short of breath as she speaks, Ella shares, “I don’t know if I can go on like this, but my Al doesn’t want to hear me talking like that.” The following thoughts might be running through your mind...

- What should I say?
- Can’t we do better so she’s not so short of breath?
- What does she want for her future care? Is it my place to talk with her about this?

These are the type of nursing questions that the iPANEL research team aims to explore, understand, and answer to improve our nursing practice.

Who are the people we are considering in relation to a palliative approach to care?

Those with life-limiting conditions — Chronic conditions expected to limit how long a person has to live, including dementia, lung, kidney and heart diseases, and cancer.

What is the care focus of the research?

A palliative approach — An approach to care focused on improving the quality of life of persons with life-limiting conditions, and their families. It is provided in all health care settings. It involves physical, psychological, social and spiritual care. The palliative approach is not delayed until the end stages of an illness but is applied earlier to provide active comfort-focused care and a positive approach to reducing suffering. It also promotes understanding of loss and bereavement.

Research for change

Specialized palliative units and hospices are essential for end of life care but not appropriate for all persons facing life-limiting chronic conditions. By offering a palliative approach in multiple settings, we can better care for people and their families through the many transitions of chronic conditions like dementia, lung, kidney and heart diseases, and cancer.

iPANEL’s research —by nurses for nurses— contributes to understanding how the nursing profession can help more people in BC benefit from palliative philosophies and services. With nurses offering a palliative approach in settings like residential care facilities, general hospital units and at home, more patients and families can be better supported through the many transitions in the latter part of their lives.

Become involved in the work of iPANEL

Log in at www.iPANEL.ca to stay in touch! Webinars, meetings in your local community, clinical nursing research internships, and more will be coming your way. Become involved in helping us to create nursing practice environments that contribute to excellent care for patients with chronic life-limiting conditions and their family members.
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Throughout BC, people are dying in many settings including residential care facilities, on general hospital wards and at home. Our research seeks to understand how to apply and integrate the palliative approach to any care setting where people with life-limiting chronic conditions are cared for.

Through research, we create new knowledge about how nurses can further integrate palliative philosophies and services into nonspecialized settings that provide end-of-life care.

Our research is informed by and informs clinical practice.

By creating a cycle of nursing practice to nursing research and back again, we can ensure our research is informed by clinical practice. And that the evidence we gather is relevant, useful, and well-communicated to nurses.

We accomplish this through our partnerships with both practicing and academic nurses throughout BC.

Our ultimate goal is to advance the further integration of the palliative approach into nursing practice in every care setting.

We know this takes the support and cooperation of many parties including health professionals, employers and health care consumers, but we believe that nurses can and will contribute to a better and more supported experience for British Columbians toward the end of their lives.

Four things you should know about iPanel:

1. Three quarters of the British Columbians who die, do so without being identified as people who could benefit from the services associated with palliative care.
2. Specialized palliative units and hospices are essential for end of life care but not appropriate for all persons facing life-limiting chronic conditions.
3. Throughout BC, people are dying in many settings including residential care facilities, on general hospital wards and at home.
4. Our research seeks to understand how to apply and integrate the palliative approach to any care setting where people with life-limiting chronic conditions are cared for.

Find out more about how you can participate!

www.ipanel.ca

funded by the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research