

Primary Palliative Care Research Forum Report

A successful meeting of diverse members of the palliative care community around the world was held at the University of Cape Town, under the auspices of the Division of Family Medicine, on 13 and 14 September 2010. The belief that palliative care is a *primary care* discipline, and that research in this area is especially needed to encourage evidence-based practice, is the main motivation behind the group which organised the gathering, the International Primary Palliative Care Research Group.

The purpose of the meeting was to continue to develop the network of primary palliative care researchers, with a view to collaboration and future research endeavours. Those delegates who had not yet participated in formal research were encouraged to develop this aspect of their work.

There was broad representation, with delegates from Scotland, Australia, Canada, Belgium, Colombia, Uganda, England, Nigeria, Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania and South Africa. A cross-section of professions involved in palliative care was represented. Nurses, doctors, social workers, psychologists, and others attended, but each delegate is involved in first-contact patient care, and also has an interest in palliative care research.

A workshop entitled *The research process - from conception to application* included sessions on identifying research priorities, facilitated by Prof Scott Murray from Edinburgh, Scotland; ensuring local relevance of research, by Prof Geoff Mitchell from Brisbane, Australia; accessing support in research endeavours, by Prof Fred Burge from Halifax, Nova Scotia in Canada; and collaboration in research, by Dr Alan Barnard from Cape Town.

Nine delegates presented papers on research which had been completed recently, and the quality and variety of the research demonstrated that there is much to be commended, and many avenues for further research development.

Views from three African university programmes in palliative care were presented. Dr Lindsay Farrant spoke on behalf of the University of the Witwatersrand, Dr Mhoira Leng from Makerere University in Uganda, and Dr Liz Gwyther from the University of Cape Town. Many elements of the programmes were seen to be common, but the diversity and considerable innovation in clinical services, teaching, research and development were truly exciting to hear.

The forum concluded with a series of views of palliative care from each country. The diversity of practice and range of expertise was inspiring to hear, and served the purpose of mutual encouragement and support toward the objective of developing the evidence base and also patient outcomes at primary care level.

The next meeting of this group will be held in Lisbon, Portugal on 17 and 18 May 2011, preceding the European Association of Palliative Care meeting (see <http://www.eapcnet.org/Lisbon2011>).

For more information about the group, visit <http://www.uq.edu.au/primarypallcare>, or e-mail Alan Barnard at abarnard@intermail.co.za. It is hoped to continue the discussions and develop the partnerships which started at this meeting. Another meeting, to be held in Cape Town, has been suggested for later in 2011.

