

## OPCC 2025 Abstract

### **Abstract title**

National core palliative care medicine list supports quality community-based palliative care

**Presentation type** – Short form presentation

**Theme** – Clinical care and symptom management

### **Authors**

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### **Author Bio:**

As a pharmacist, Paul Tait has extensive experience in palliative care. He is dedicated to enhancing the community pharmacists' role in supporting individuals with life-limiting illnesses; actively advocating for them on various national committees and within South Australia.

Paul's PhD, earned in 2022, focused on understanding the roles of pharmacists, caregivers, and medications for Australians with advanced illnesses.

Currently, he works with the South Australian Virtual Care Service, researching the role of virtual care in improving patient management.

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## **Abstract body – 300 words**

### **Background**

Terminal palliative care patients are physiologically unstable and severe symptoms can emerge rapidly. Diminishing ability to swallow oral medicines at end-of-life can necessitate using subcutaneous and/or sublingual routes of administration. However, such medicine formulations are not commonly stocked in community pharmacies, making timely access to needed medicines challenging for carers.

### **Aim**

caring@home aimed to compile a national core list of palliative care medicines:

- for use in managing common terminal symptoms
- to guide prescribers and pharmacists on what to prescribe and stock in the community for patients requiring urgent symptom relief.

### **Methods**

A national working party comprising representatives from key stakeholder organisations with clinical experience in palliative care and/or pharmacy, was convened to develop a National Core Community Palliative Care Medicines list (the List).

The working party followed two Guiding Principles to determine appropriate medicines.

1. The List should be informed by the Palliative Care Therapeutic Guidelines, Therapeutic Goods Administration, and existing State/Territory lists of core palliative care medicines.
2. Criteria for medicine selection included:
  - Evidence-based efficacy
  - Cost considerations

- Common use across Australia
- Efficacy in managing multiple symptoms
- Community-friendly formulation for administration
- Transport and storage requirements

## **Results**

Four medicines were identified:

- Clonazepam, 2.5mg/mL drops, for agitation
- Haloperidol, 5mg/mL injection, for delirium, nausea/vomiting, terminal restlessness, refractory distress
- Hyoscine butylbromide, 20mg/mL injection, for respiratory tract secretions/noisy breathing (prophylactic)
- Morphine, 10mg/mL injection, for pain, dyspnoea

Most common terminal phase symptoms in uncomplicated palliative care patients can be optimally managed using medicines from the List.

## **Conclusion**

The National Core Community Palliative Medicines List is a practical solution to facilitate access to medicines in the community. Community pharmacists stocking the formulations on the list, and prescribers having an awareness of their availability will enable people to receive end-of-life care at home if that is their wish.