



NICS-VQC FELLOW 2006 - 2008

Dr Melanie Benson

Palliative Care Consultant,
Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, VIC



Implementation Project:
Improving the management of cancer pain

Dr Benson's project is a multi-level intervention at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Melbourne, targeting resident medical officers, senior clinicians, and the organisation itself. The project aims to influence clinical behaviour and improve the gap between evidence and clinical practice in the area of cancer pain management. Focussing on pain assessment and prescribing, Dr Benson is surveying clinicians at the 'coal face' of managing inpatients to understand their knowledge, attitudes and prescribing behaviour. She will also conduct a barrier assessment at the organisational level, to gain a better understanding of organisational barriers to implementing best practice in the management of patients with cancer pain.

Implementation Project Progress Report, October 2007:

Initial baseline assessments of pain assessment/documentation and analgesia were performed in June 2006. Results have been fed back to key stakeholders and the junior medical officers as have the results of pre and post audits of each three month rotation of residents.

Education about pain guidelines occurs with each three month rotation of Resident Medical Officers (RMO) to Peter MacCallum from their parent hospital (St Vincent's and Royal Melbourne Hospital). The education program includes: outlining best practice at RMO Orientation an interactive cancer pain management lecture in the first month of rotation dissemination of guidelines and production of ward based summary of conversion charts and best opioid prescribing practice audit and feedback, and informal reminders by clinical Pain and Palliative care staff.

With each rotation of residents comes the opportunity to recommence another circuit of the PDSA (Plan Do Study Act) cycle. Planned strategies in future rotations will include:

- Academic detailing of small group or individual residents to feed back performance and deliver targeted education regarding best practice in pain management.
- Implementation of the VQC Acute Pain Toolkit at Peter Mac to improve nursing documentation and patient education (currently underway).

The National Institute
of Clinical Studies (NICS)

THE VICTORIAN
QUALITY
COUNCIL
Safety and
Quality in Health



- Embedding auditing of nursing pain documentation into ward practice modelled on a successful fall management program with auditing and reporting to clinical governance as an incentive to best practice.

At the time of this report improvements have been made in documentation and awareness of pain. The RMOs parent hospitals and the Victorian Postgraduate Medical Foundation will have the results of this project made available to them to increase the opportunities to educate residents and to develop an incentive for RMOs to participate in education and quality improvement.

Funding Partner:

Dr Benson's fellowship is supported by the Victorian Quality Council (VQC).

The VQC is responsible for fostering better quality health services in Victoria by working with stakeholders to develop useful tools and strategies to improve health service safety and quality.

Project Mentor:

Dr Odette Spruyt
Department of Cancer Pain and
Palliative Care, Peter MacCallum
Cancer Centre, VIC

NICS Mentor:

Dr David Hillis
Executive General Manager, Royal
Australasian College of Surgeons,
VIC

Key Presentation:

Benson M. Improving cancer pain management - lessons learnt from an implementation project. 9th Australian Palliative Care Conference. Melbourne; 2007.

Benson M. Bridging the gap between acute care and palliative care at a comprehensive cancer centre [poster]. International Union Against Cancer (UICC) World Cancer Congress. Washington; 2006

Benson M. Hitting and hurdling the barriers in guideline implementation and practice change [presentation]. National Institute of Clinical Studies Symposium - Using Evidence: Using Guidelines. Melbourne; 2006.

Benson M, Saward D. Using examples from acute care [workshop]. National Institute of Clinical Studies Symposium - Using Evidence: Using Guidelines. Melbourne; 2006.