

“Palliative care and lymphoedema. Wanted: Lymphoedema and palliative care specialists. Creativity and innovation essential.” Workshop

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Lymphoedema is an incurable progressive condition causing symptoms which impact on the quality of life of palliative care patients. Palliative care requires a holistic approach in order to enhance quality of life. The management of patients with lymphoedema in advanced palliative conditions reflects the principles of palliative care, with a focus on the palliation of physical symptoms and independence for as long and comfortably as possible. The treatment of oedema and lymphoedema within palliative care needs to be considered in the context of the pathophysiology within the cancer disease process and the effects on the body.

Thus the management of lymphoedema in this patient group requires a modified intensity approach (Best Practice Guidelines, 2006) provided by a well-coordinated multi-professional team (Williams, 2004) with specialist training in lymphoedema management. This workshop will review conventional and non-conventional lymphoedema intervention for palliative care patients, as well as preventative measures. This includes, but is not limited to, medical management, bandaging, lymphatic drainage, skin care, pressure garment prescription, education and exercise.

This workshop is presented by staff from The Hope Healthcare Specialist Palliative Care Service (SPCS) in NSW which provides holistic, multi-disciplinary advice, intervention and care to patients with life limiting illness, their carers and their primary health care providers. The service currently provides specialised palliative care through inpatient units, community services and day hospitals. Hope Healthcare services include Braeside Hospital, Greenwich Hospital, Neringah Hospital and Northern Beaches Palliative Care Service. In addition to Specialist Palliative Care Services, we also provide Rehabilitation and Aged Care Psychiatry services for our community.