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Tuesday 3 October 2006

Facts for consumers about morphine and other opioid medicines in palliative care *brochure now available!*

There are many myths and fears associated with the use of morphine and other opioid medicines. These myths make it very difficult for patients, their families and carers to fully understand opioid medicines and feel confident in using them effectively.

Evidence has found that when patients, families and carers do not have the right information, and are unable to discuss their fears, they do not take medicines correctly – and critically, may not be experiencing the best pain relief possible.

Professor Margaret O'Connor, President of Palliative Care Australia, with her many years of patient care experience, advises that patients and carers often fear addiction and believe that if they “grin and bear” the pain now and not take their medicines – the medicine will still work for them when they really need it.

“Effective pain management – which includes the right medicine at the right time and a partnership between the patient, their family and care team (doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other allied health professionals), is vital for palliative patients. The aim is for the patient to achieve the best quality of life possible while they live with their terminal illness,” said Professor O'Connor.

Palliative Care Australia has developed, in consultation with expert clinicians and consumer advisors, an information resource – a brochure entitled *Facts about morphine and other opioid medicines in palliative care*. This brochure is designed to provide information to help address the myths that have evolved about opioids and replace them with the facts.

The brochure provides facts about pain medicine as well as links to the right sources for further information about:

- pain and options for pain relief medicines, including the strong pain medicine group (opioids)
- looking after medicines safely
- taking medicines correctly
- how sharing accurate information about what the patient is experiencing is vital to achieving the best pain management plan.

The brochure is available through General Practitioners, Palliative Care Services or via www.pallcare.org.au. Or phone PCA on 02 6232 4433.