



RACP
Specialists. Together
EDUCATE ADVOCATE INNOVATE



Are you interested
in becoming a specialist in

**PALLIATIVE
MEDICINE?**

WHAT IS PALLIATIVE MEDICINE?

Palliative Medicine is the study and treatment of patients living with progressive life-limiting or severe advanced illness with a focus on alleviating suffering and promoting quality of life. Areas of expertise include; pain and symptom management; psychosocial and spiritual support for patients and their families; advance care planning and coordination of care.

Palliative medicine specialists work within multidisciplinary specialist teams. Activities include, direct treatment, counselling patients and families, coordinating care with other healthcare providers, and providing consultative services.

SPECIALISTS IN PALLIATIVE MEDICINE

Specialists in palliative medicine utilise their understanding of the pathophysiology and medical management of advanced malignant and non-malignant disease (including end organ failure), the processes of dying, and psychosocial and spiritual issues in the support of patients with complex problems.

Paediatric palliative medicine is provided for many of the children who die each year. In regional and rural areas this support is often provided by adult palliative care services working closely with paediatricians and primary care.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SPECIALIST IN PALLIATIVE MEDICINE

- Expert knowledge and skills in complex symptom assessment and management relating to advanced illness and imminent death.
- Understanding of the pathophysiology of advanced disease and symptoms such as pain or nausea.
- Expert knowledge of pharmacology of relevant medications
- Ability to establish therapeutic and supportive relationships with patients and families.
- Expertise in discussing end-of-life issues and advance care planning.
- Sensitivity towards cultural and language differences, particularly in relation to death and dying.
- Collaborative approach to work effectively in a team of health professionals.
- Engagement in quality improvement and service development.
- Advocacy for patients and families to ensure access to services and support.
- Interest in research and evidence-based practice.

WHAT DOES THE CHAPTER DO?

The Australasian Chapter of Palliative Medicine (AChPM) supports the professional careers of all Fellows and trainees of the Chapter in the following areas:

- education, training and assessment of trainees
- education, continuing professional development and quality performance of Fellows
- policy and advocacy
- assessment of overseas trained professionals
- research
- workforce.

The AChPM Committee is the peak decision-making body for the Chapter, promoting and advancing the body of knowledge of palliative medicine within the College.



COMMENTS FROM CLINICIANS

Why did you choose this specialty and what do you most like about it?

Palliative medicine provides exposure to a challenging, and broad spectrum of medical conditions. These conditions are managed with a patient and family-focussed model of care, rather than being disease-specific. Working in this field also brings the challenges and rewards of working in a team environment and provides scope for a mixture of clinical work, teaching, policy and research.

What advice would you give to someone thinking about this specialty?

Talk with those who are actively involved in palliative medicine and palliative care, and work with them for a time if possible. Engage with College trainee representatives about their experiences.

Getting involved with palliative care audits, other quality assurance projects or research is a great way to network and gain exposure whilst improving skills.

How did you find the training program?

Palliative medicine has a well-developed curriculum and syllabus. The training program offers a range of supervised training experiences in a variety of clinical settings such as acute care, community, and inpatient experience, as well as oncology and pain medicine. There is strong trainee involvement in the further development of the specialty and advocacy for trainee issues. There are regular trainee workshops and educational sessions, and a supportive trainee network.

Are there any lifestyle benefits?

Palliative medicine offers a wide range of full-time, part-time, or job-share arrangements, as well as overseas work opportunities.

HOW DO I BECOME A SPECIALIST IN PALLIATIVE MEDICINE?

There are two training pathways leading to a specialist qualification in palliative medicine. Both are supervised by a Combined Training Committee and use the same advanced training curriculum and syllabus:

Advanced training under the RACP leading to the award of Fellowship of the RACP (FRACP). Physician trainees who have completed Basic Physician Training (including success in the RACP Examinations) can undertake Advanced Training in Palliative Medicine.

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Training under the Chapter leading to the award of Fellowship of the Chapter (FACHPM). Entry to Chapter training is restricted to holders of a Fellowship from a clinical College in Australia or New Zealand, or an overseas equivalent recognised by the relevant Colleges, for example:

- Anaesthetics (FANZCA)
- Emergency Medicine (FACEM)
- General Practice (FRACGP and FRNZCGP)
- Intensive Care Medicine (FJFICM)
- Pain Medicine (FFPM, ANZCA)
- Physicians (Adult Internal Medicine or Paediatrics & Child Health) (FRACP)
- Psychiatrists (FRANZCP)
- Radiation Oncology (FRANZCR)

VISIT

[www.racp.edu.au/trainees/
advanced-training/advanced-training-programs/
palliative-medicine](http://www.racp.edu.au/trainees/advanced-training/advanced-training-programs/palliative-medicine)