

Calvary Centre for Palliative Care Research

Using innovative distance learning approaches to educate informal carers

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Distance education methods are useful for delivering education to palliative caregivers: A single-arm trial of an education package (Palliative Caregivers Education Package)

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1, 2
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Background

- Caregivers have unmet information and support needs.
- 1:1 or groups are helpful, but have limitations



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A potential solution?

- Distance learning
- Own time, place, pace
- Dip in/dip out
- Equalising disparities



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Aims

- Design an innovative distance-learning educational package.
- Determine ideal content, learning style preferences
- Determine the **acceptability and feasibility** of the educational package.
- Determine sample size, recruitment and randomisation processes for a **definitive trial**.
- Examine the impact of the intervention on carer **self-efficacy**.

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Design and outcomes

- Single arm proof of concept trial, pre/post measures and qualitative feasibility/acceptability
- Outcomes:
 - (i) Data to inform a scaled-up two-armed trial (eligibility, recruitment, retention, power calcs etc)
 - (ii) self efficacy, carer preparedness, carer tasks/consequences/needs

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Outcomes were measured

- at baseline &
- at six-weeks



- Assessment of feasibility/acceptability via qualitative interviews at 6+ weeks.

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Two modules were developed and tested

1. nutrition/hydration
2. pain management

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- Written booklets
- Videos to demonstrate vicarious experience
- Blended learning
- Androgogy focused on adult learning styles
- Dialogical approach designed to give a sense of someone 'walking hand in hand'



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The materials: Watch the videos and download the booklets here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B3ZYxWxfQDdfUHcxRUViTXFta0E?usp=sharing>

or email for a copy (see last slide for details)

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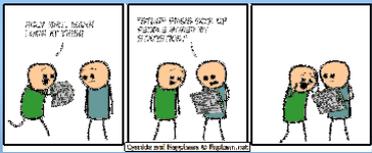
Composition of the materials

- Vignettes
- Exercises
- Videos
- Reflections
- Hints and tips
- 'Did you know'

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The trial and the data



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Results



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Recruitment

Screened for eligibility: 255
 Excluded: 134
 Invited: 121
 Enrolled: 25
 Completed baseline and follow-up measures: 18

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Participant characteristics

- Female (65%)
- Caring for spouse (91%)
- Occupation retired (56%)
- Age 50-69 (56%)
- Patient diagnosis cancer (56%)

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Results

Improvements were observed on two subsidiary measures:

1. **Caregiving tasks, consequences, and needs** ($p=0.03$, CI: 0.72, 9.4)
2. **Caregiver preparedness** ($p=0.001$, CI: -1.22, -0.46),

But **not self-efficacy** ($p=0.86$, CI: -0.17, 0.2).

The data indicated that distance learning is acceptable and feasible for caregivers

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Feasibility/acceptability

It also helps us when we go to see the GP, or when we go to see the oncologist. [...] It means that we're prepared and we can ask them questions as opposed to going on the internet and trying to find information from there.

(C4, caregiver of a person with cancer)

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I went back over little bits and so it helped me rephrase how I was saying things and understanding why he was doing that. And also there was a bit there when he was denying being in pain but you could see that he was. So going back, yeah, and reading over those [...] it helped me understand where he was coming from and also to understand how I should react to his reaction. (C4, carer of person with cancer)

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Take home messages

- Distance learning is feasible and acceptable
- The materials increase carer preparedness
- The materials address inequities in access to group education
- The approach could be adopted internationally



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Materials are free and available to use

Email me for the resources:
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Distance education methods are useful for delivering education to palliative caregivers: A single-arm trial of an education package (PalliativE Caregivers Education Package)

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