

Palliative Care Pointers: What Can We Learn?

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Pain management for patients in the palliative phase is the most recognised and requested intervention provided by those who work in Specialist Palliative Care. It is well known that pain is a complex problem – a mixture of the physical, emotional, social and spiritual, and skilled attention to all elements is often required. When people are facing death, adequate analgesia becomes a matter of urgency and without some degree of pain control, achieving important goals in the time they have left can be very difficult or even impossible. Our experience of using ketamine, methadone and intrathecal analgesia will be shared to highlight some of the opportunities and challenges that exist when we venture away from using standard therapies. Attending to the person as a unique individual, and not just to the pain, is crucial. Ultimately it is clear that more is not necessarily better.