



## A WORD FROM DR REBECCA LUCIER

*APMJ Medical Student Representative*

Welcome to the May APMJ Newsletter!

My name is Becky and I am a new committee member, in the role of Medical Student Representative. I am currently an IMT trainee in Wessex. I will be working to link up more medical schools with the APMJ, to increase understanding of and opportunities in Palliative Medicine for undergraduates.

We hope you have been enjoying our recent seminar series of Communication in Palliative Care. They have been really well received and we are so grateful to the speakers for sharing their experiences with us.

Coming up on the 21st May we have our APMJ Careers webinar. This will be really informative for those of you looking to improve your portfolio for a Palliative Medicine specialty application in the near future. Don't forget to sign up for the link.

In this newsletter we are highlighting a piece of research, wherever you are working we hope you will find the article to be relevant to you. The research looks at our response to relatives asking "how long?" I'm sure we have all been asked this by patients or relatives at some point and it can be really hard to know what to say, so we hope you find this useful.

If you have any questions for us or would like to submit an article or reflection to be published in our future newsletters, we'd love to hear from you!



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Webinar Series

## COMMUNICATION IN PALLIATIVE CARE WEBINAR SERIES

This series will be in 3 parts and you can book for 1, 2 or all 3 sessions.  
This event is **FREE** to attend.

**WEDNESDAY 17 APRIL 2024**  
**WEDNESDAY 1 MAY 2024**  
**WEDNESDAY 15 MAY 2024**

**19:00 - 20:30**



[www.apmeducationhub.org](http://www.apmeducationhub.org)



## APMJ CAREERS WEBINAR

**21 May 2024** | **18:30 - 20:30**

Scan Here



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## **RESEARCH OF THE MONTH**

### **'HOW LONG DO YOU THINK?' UNRESPONSIVE DYING PATIENTS IN A SPECIALIST PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICE: A CONSECUTIVE COHORT STUDY**

*Tricia O'Connor, Wai-Man Liu, Juliane Samara, Joanne Lewis, Catherine Paterson*

*There are several times in the course of a life limiting illness when patients and families ask the 'how long do you think' question. This study explores answers to the question when patients are in the last days and hours of their lives and are no longer responding. Families want to know how long their dying relative has left, to ensure all relevant family members have an opportunity to say their farewells, and to ensure spiritual and cultural needs are met. Many families wish to maintain a vigil and be present at the time of death. Previous research indicates that being present at the time of death is important to allay a sense of guilt and assist with bereavement. Lack of awareness of approaching death is associated with negative bereavement outcomes. For the dying person, the presence of family is important for achieving a 'good death'.*

*As a palliative care clinician, I am frequently asked this 'how long do you think' question.*

#### **What is already known about the topic?**

- A decrease in the conscious state is an accepted sign of imminent death.*
- Planning and preparing for death improves the quality of dying and death outcomes.*
- Lack of awareness of approaching death is associated with negative bereavement outcomes.*



## What this paper adds

- Findings identify an association between the Australia-modified Karnofsky Performance Status 10 score and timeframes to death.
- The length of time to death for most patients once they are comatose or barely rousable is two days.
- However, this study highlights the importance of clinicians acknowledging and conveying uncertainty in prognostic accuracy.

## Implications for practice, theory or policy

- These research findings support better communication and decision-making and can improve end-of-life clinical care planning.
- Using these findings, care can be better targetted to support good patient and family outcomes in the last days of life.
- Recognition of imminent death should be communicated clearly. Finding from this research can be used to support and inform practice and policy in end-of-life care.

The full article 'How long do you think?' Unresponsive dying patients in a specialist palliative care service: A consecutive cohort study is available Open Access in Palliative Medicine <https://doi.org/10.1177/02692163241238903>



## UPCOMING EVENTS

15th May 2024

Communication in Palliative Care Webinar Series - Session 3 - Specific Palliative Care Scenarios

<https://apmeducationhub.org/events/communication-session-3/>

21st May 2024

APMJ Palliative Care Careers Webinar

<https://apmeducationhub.org/events/apmj-careers-webinar/>

September 2024

Virtual Ethics Course

<https://apmeducationhub.org/events/virtual-ethics-september-2024/>

September & October 2024

APM & PCRS Research Course

<https://pcrs.org.uk/events/apm-pcrs-research-course-2024/>



## USEFUL RESOURCES

### APM/ PCRS Research directory

<https://apmeducationhub.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Palliative-Care-Network-April-2023.pdf>

### Palliative Medicine Curriculum

<https://www.jrcptb.org.uk/sites/default/files/Palliative%20Medicine%202022%20curriculum%20FINAL.pdf>

### e-ELCA

[https://portal.e-lfh.org.uk/myElearning/Index?HierarchyId=0\\_29&programmId=29](https://portal.e-lfh.org.uk/myElearning/Index?HierarchyId=0_29&programmId=29)

## PREVIOUS WEBINARS TO WATCH

### Palliative Care in Neurological Disorders

Web Link <https://apmeducationhub.org/resources-juniors/>

Password [zGX00vb6jFYRG4yC](#)



## OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

### APM Juniors Survey

We want to better understand what you want from an APM Juniors membership and would appreciate your feedback via this survey. It should take no longer than 10 minutes.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdne2yTuwoZsrMljpn3u1C39qkRgEzLz5orrbiWi2UH1HfWmw/viewform?pli=1>