

## Journal Watch

### Development of the Palliative Care Needs Assessment Tool (PC-NAT) for use by multi-disciplinary health professionals

**Prepared by:** Dr. Ken Evans, FMR2

Location: Tertiary Palliative Care Unit, Grey Nuns Hospital, Edmonton, Alberta

**Reference:** Palliative Medicine 2008; 22: 956–964

#### **Abstract**

The PC-NAT was developed to facilitate the allocation of palliative care resources to those most in need. In order to evaluate the tool, a convenience sample of 103 health professionals viewed three videotaped consultations involving simulated patients. They then completed the PC-NAT and provided feedback.

Face and content validity, acceptability, and feasibility of the PC-NAT were confirmed. Kappa scores indicated adequate inter-rater reliability for the majority of domains. The patient spirituality domain, caregiver physical domain, and family relationship domain had low reliability.

*Advantages of tool:* Easy to do; 5-10 minutes to complete (1 page; mostly tick-boxes); little burden on patient or care-givers; can be used repeatedly and at any point in time; can be used by various types of health professionals; helps to match types and levels of need to appropriate services (rather than simply identifying who would benefit from a referral to specialized palliative care services).

*Disadvantages of tool:* More paperwork; some training is helpful (but not essential).

#### **Strengths:**

Multi-site, multi-disciplinary study

Involved potential users

#### **Weakness:**

Not a real-life setting (such a study is currently underway)

Could not do blinding or randomization, therefore subject to various biases

Face and content validity, acceptability, and feasibility subjectively assessed (does not describe exactly how)

Australian study, so may not be generalizable to Canada

#### **Application to palliative care:**

Would facilitate the allocation of appropriate palliative care resources to those most in need. At a minimum, would act as a memory aid for identifying patient needs at a point in time.