

Palliative Care Guidance in Aged Care: Role of palliAGED

Tieman J^{1,2}, Gravier S¹, Erny-Albrecht K^{1,2}

- CareSearch Project, College of Nursing and Health Sciences Flinders University, Adelaide, South Australia
- Research Centre for Palliative Care, Death and Dying Flinders University, Adelaide, South Australia

Email: jennifer.tieman@flinders.edu.au

Twitter: @palliaged

Web: www.palliaged.com.au

Introduction

The aged care system is under pressure given Australia's demography and a reform process that is currently in play. Data from the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare reminds us that of the almost 245,000 people over 65 years who died in Australia in the 2 years to 30 June 2014, 80% had used an aged care program before their death [1].

Australia has led the way with aged care palliative care guidelines. Published in 2005 and updated in 2006, the Palliative Approach in Residential Aged Care (APRAC) Guidelines were the first guidelines in the world that provided evidence based support for health professionals on providing palliative care in residential aged care facilities. A companion set of guidelines published in 2011 provided evidence based guidance for a Palliative Approach for Aged Care in the Community Setting (COMPAC). This landmark work acknowledged the importance of aged care as a setting in which palliative care needs would be found and also the impact of an ageing population on demand for palliative care.

Making guidance useful

Guidelines need to be updated to incorporate new evidence for practice as it is published. They also need to address emerging issues of importance in aged care and palliative care provision. Most importantly they need to be accessible and suitable for use.

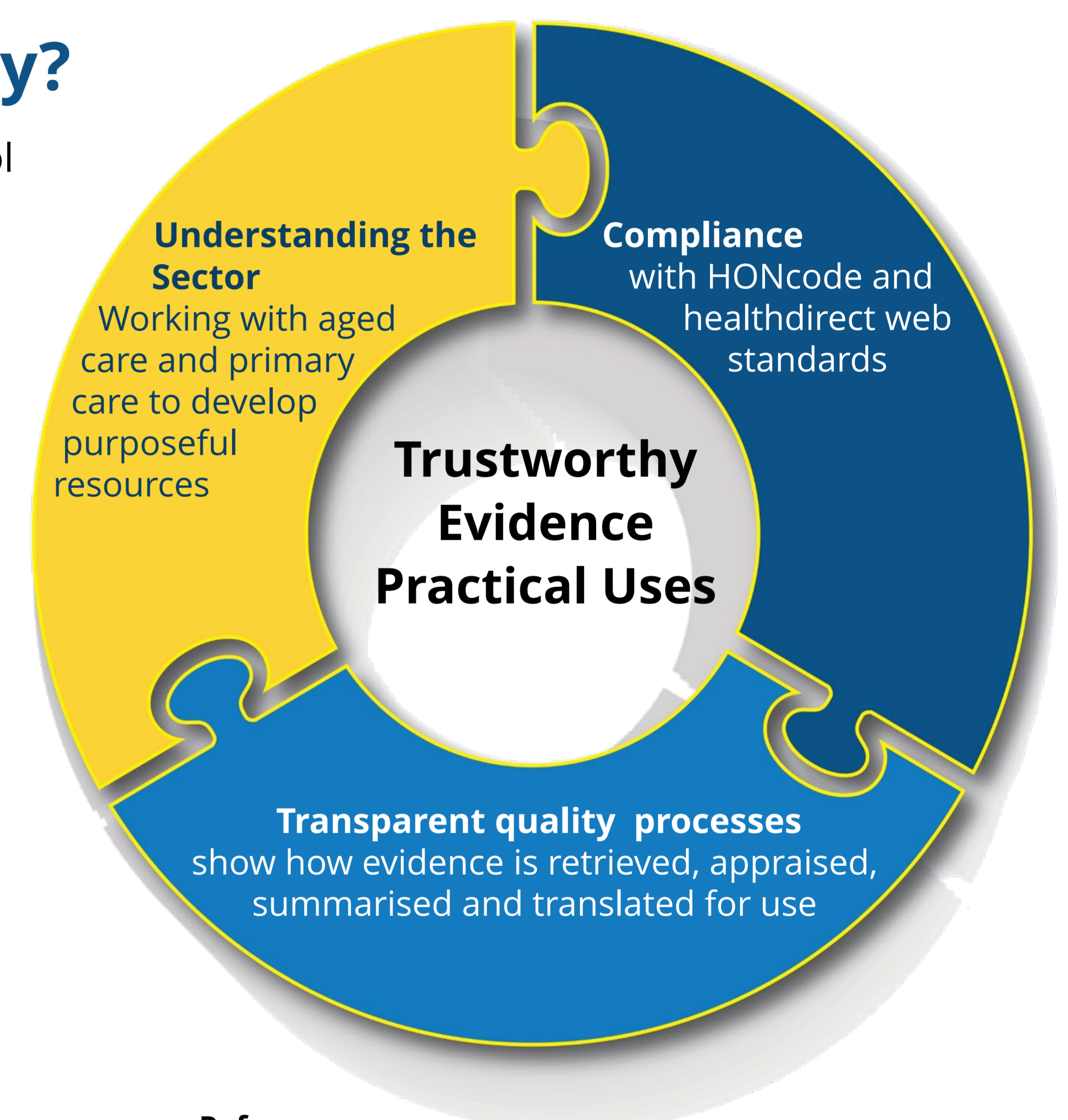
In 2015, the Department of Health undertook a feasibility study to inform a proposed review of the APRAC and COMPAC Guidelines. This study found an ongoing need for a dynamic up-to-date evidence base to drive better practice of palliative care in aged care. The need for accessible and practical tools and support was also clearly expressed in contributions by stakeholders [2]. CareSearch (Flinders University) was approached to produce a guidance resource in 2016 and in May 2017 palliAGED was launched.

Is palliAGED trustworthy?

AGREE II is a widely used and validated tool that provides a framework for developing guidelines and a mechanism for assessing guidelines [3]. It is one of a set of quality appraisal tools used by project staff to assess retrieved literature for inclusion in the web content.

Core elements of palliAGED's processes highlight how it complies with the quality domains outlined in AGREE II.

- Scope:** The objective, audience and purpose are clearly described on the palliAGED homepage.
- Stakeholder Involvement:** Two advisory groups with multi-discipline representatives drove the guidance development.
- Rigor:** A protocol describing quality criteria and quality processes was implemented. Guidance is rated and reviewed by expert advisory groups.
- Clarity:** Key messages and a quality statement are included in each Evidence synthesis.
- Applicability:** A Practice Centre translates the guidance for use.
- Editorial Independence:** Funding body does not influence guidance reporting.



References

- AIHW Cause of death patterns and people's use of aged care: a Pathways in Aged Care analysis of 2012-14 death statistics. [Internet]. 2018 [cited 2019 May 9]; AIHW cat. no. AGE 83.
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Evidence supporting person-centred care

