

Researching “a good death”

Because of the rapid aging of the population and modern advances in medicine, the likelihood of sudden death at a fairly young age is becoming more remote. The illness trajectory is changing to one of gradually increasing mental and functional frailty before death. This phenomenon has fueled an interest in what may be called “a good death,” with the expectation that medical practitioners are aware of both the practicalities involved as well as the ethics. Medical publishers are rushing to fill the need for information on all aspects of palliative and hospice care, and the

This article is the opinion of the Library of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC and has not been peer reviewed by the BCMJ Editorial Board.

College Library has developed a multimedia collection for registrants to use. A search of the journal literature, for example, brings up over 36 000 articles on the subject of palliative

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care alone, almost half of which are available from the College Library’s website in full text. Almost 50 quality print textbooks on the subject may be borrowed, along with seven DVDs and videos. For those physicians who

enjoy the flexibility and availability of e-books, the Library subscribes to an electronic version of Walsh’s *Palliative Medicine* through MDConsult. Users of MP3 players may download some of the 71 audio digest programs on palliative care, or borrow the CD versions from the Library’s collection.

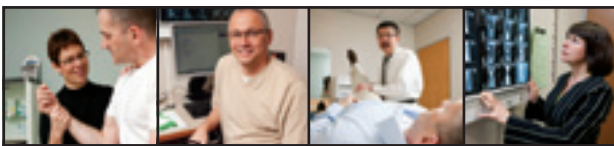
Ethical issues have always been at the foundation of medical care, and the shift toward understanding the path from treatment to palliation is not new. The use of a diverse, multimedia approach may be viewed as one of the many benefits of the modern medical library.

—Karen MacDonell

—Robert Melrose

—Judy Neill

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