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Our dementia challenge: arise palliative care.

Authors: [Brennan, E.](#) Department of Palliative Care, Calvary Hospital, Kogarah, New South Wales, Australia.; Department of Palliative Care, The St George Hospital, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.; Faculty of Medicine, The University of NSW Sydney, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.
[Chapman, M.](#) Department of Palliative Care, Canberra Hospital, ACT, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, Australia.; Medical School, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, Australia.
[Gardner, M.D.](#) Department of Palliative Care, Calvary Hospital, Kogarah, New South Wales, Australia.; Faculty of Medicine, The University of NSW Sydney, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.
[Narasimhan, M.](#) Department of Neurology, The Sutherland Hospital, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.; Brain and Mind Centre, University of Sydney, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.
[Cohen, J.](#) Department of Palliative Care, Calvary Hospital, Kogarah, New South Wales, Australia.

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Abstract: While many of the maladies of the 20th century are steadily coming under control, the march of neurodegenerative disorders continues largely unchecked. Dementias are an exemplar of such disorders; their incidence and prevalence continue to rise, in large part due to a steadily ageing population worldwide. They represent a group of chronic, progressive and, ultimately, fatal neurodegenerative diseases. Dementia has remained therapeutically recalcitrant. It is not a single disease, and because of that, we cannot expect a single panacea. While primary prevention rightly gains prominence, those with established disease currently require a shift in focus from curative intent towards improved quality of life. Enter palliative care. The sheer number and complexity of needs of patients with dementia, from the physical to the psychosocial and spiritual, necessitates the engagement of a wide range of medical disciplines: nursing and allied health professionals. One of those disciplines, as highlighted in the recent Australian Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, is palliative care. This paper shall expand upon that role in the overall context of care for those with dementia.
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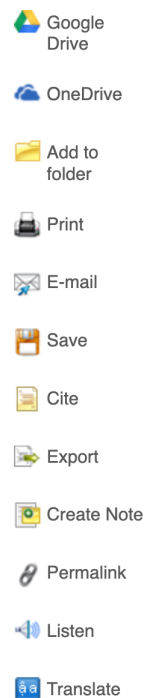


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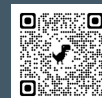


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