

Gold Coast 4th Annual Palliative Care Conference 2025

Palliative Medicine Interventions and Updates

Saturday 21st June - Presenter Biographies



Dr Shantona Bag, Staff Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health
Chair of Session 1: Philosophy Focus: Looking back to look forward

Dr Shantona Bag is a Palliative Care Consultant at the Gold Coast Specialist Palliative Care Service. Trained in Sydney, Shantona is now part of the dynamic team of consultants at the Gold Coast, as well as a Senior Lecturer with University of Queensland. Her portfolio includes advanced training education within her local HHS as well as part of the Queensland Palliative Medicine Education Committee and has interests in communication and audits within the service.



Dr Joanne Doran, Staff Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health
The Road Less Travelled

Dr Jo Doran is a doctor with over 30 years' experience in palliative care. Jo currently works for Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service as a senior consultant.

Originally from the UK, she trained in London and completed her post graduate training in Sydney. From 1999-2012 she was Area Medical Director for Palliative Care in Northern NSW.

She has been involved in policy development and implementation on local, state and national levels. She is passionate about education in end-of-life care and is highly regarded as a guest speaker and MC.

In recognition of her contribution to palliative care she was awarded the Palliative Care NSW Leadership Award, was nominated for NSW Woman of the Year and more recently was nominated as Mentor of the Year in her current role.



Dr Joanne Cerni, Staff Specialist, Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health
Dyspnoea Management Guidelines

Dr Jo Cerni is a Palliative Medicine Physician working at the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service in Specialist Palliative Care and Kidney Supportive Care. Jo's special interests include non-malignant palliative care and clinical education.



Dr Nasser Essack, Staff Specialist Cardiologist, Gold Coast Health
Cardiology Focus – Valvular Heart Disease Procedures – Indications, Outcomes and Palliative Care

Dr Essack is a Consultant Cardiologist at Gold Coast University Hospital. He graduated in 1981 in Ireland and thereafter completed Specialist Physician training in Durban, South Africa. He completed Cardiology training in 1990 and joined the Gold Coast Health Service in 2000.

Over the last 35 years he has been involved in all aspects of Adult Cardiology from prevention to intervention.

He has acquired a wealth of clinical experience during his long career, being part of emerging technologies and innovation in modern day Cardiology practice.



Dr Aik (A Z) Low, Registrar Advanced Trainee Geriatrician
Geriatrics: Management of Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD)

Dr. A.Z. Low completed his MBBS Degree at the University of Queensland in 2015, having first obtained an undergraduate degree in Biomedical Sciences (Hons) in Malaysia prior to that. Currently, he is pursuing a dual training Physician Advanced Training Program in both Geriatric Medicine and General Medicine. He has worked in the Geriatric Department in the Gold Coast University Hospital since 2024, a great experience, in his words, that has led him to be invited to be a speaker at the conference.



Dr Puneet Prasad, Staff Specialist Geriatrician, Gold Coast Health
Geriatrics: Management of Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD)

Dr. Prasad is a dual trained Geriatrician and General Physician working at the Gold Coast University Hospital. He is currently part of the BPSD Education working group at the hospital.



Caoimhe Scales, Senior Allied Health Advisor, NSW Ministry of Health
Exercise and Palliative Care

Caoimhe is a Senior Allied Health Advisor in the Health Professional Workforce Unit at the NSW Ministry of Health. In this role, she supports the Allied Health portfolio and oversees statewide allied health projects within the Workforce Planning and Talent Development Branch. As an Accredited Exercise Physiologist, Caoimhe has pioneered several exercise physiology services for people living with chronic and complex diseases within NSW Health. Notably, she established the Sydney Local Health District Palliative Care Exercise Physiology service, the first of its kind in NSW.

Caoimhe is also a dedicated clinical educator who has supervised early career exercise physiologists and exercise physiology students, and lectures at the University of Sydney on Exercise Physiology for Chronic Kidney Disease. Her contributions to the field of Exercise Physiology have been acknowledged by Exercise and Sports Science Australia (ESSA). In 2021, Caoimhe was awarded Accredited Exercise Physiologist of the Year and recognised as a Female Leader in Exercise & Sports Science by ESSA.



Dr Mario Mateus, Staff Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health
Chair of Session 3 - Pharmacotherapy 2: Drugs once available becoming banned – Opioids, Addiction and Chronic Pain

Mario is a Consultant Physician in Palliative Medicine working with the Gold Coast Specialist Palliative Care Service. He originally hails from Toronto, Canada - where he completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Toronto. He completed his medical degree and post graduate training throughout Queensland. He has had experience working in rural and remote communities. He has special interests in palliative care education. In his spare time, he enjoys BBQ and reading a good book.



Dr Paul Glare, Specialist Physician in Pain Medicine, Royal North Shore Hospital
The Interface of Persistent Pain and Palliative Care

Professor Paul Glare is the Chair of Pain Medicine in the Northern Clinical School of the University of Sydney and Director of the Pain Management Research Institute (PMRI) of the Kolling Institute of Medical Research.

Prior to taking up this appointment in 2016, Paul was Chief of the Pain & Palliative Care Service, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York for 8 years.

Paul is also Head of the Specialty of Pain Medicine, in Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney, and he leads the Research Network of the Faculty of Pain Medicine of ANZCA. He was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia earlier this year in recognition of his service to pain medicine and palliative care.



Dr Lisa Shelley, General Physician & Addiction Medicine Specialist, Currumbin Clinic
Opioid Replacement Therapy in Palliative Care

Dr Shelley provides care at Currumbin Clinic admitting patients with substance use disorders, consulting inpatients for Addiction Medicine and General Medicine and sees Addiction Medicine and General Medicine outpatients. She will be commencing a part-time role at Tweed Valley Hospital as Addiction Medicine Specialist in June. She is passionate about advocating for gold standard care of those with substance use disorders from an addiction, medical and psychiatric perspective.



Lorna Chess-Williams, Senior Pharmacist, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health

Shortages, Substitutes and Solutions: Legal Drug Dealers to the Rescue

Lorna is a Senior Pharmacist in the Gold Coast Specialist Palliative Care Service. Lorna has extensive experience in palliative care both in the UK and Australia and is passionate about supporting patients and their families to achieve the best care possible through the optimisation of medications for management of their symptoms. Lorna's focus is on resource development and education as well as driving new service initiatives to develop the service now and into the future.



Heleni Georgiou, Senior Pharmacist. Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health

Shortages, Substitutes and Solutions: Legal Drug Dealers to the Rescue

Heléni is a Senior Pharmacist in the Gold Coast Specialist Palliative Care Service. Heleni is passionate about improving equitable access to medicines, complex symptom management, and enhancing interdisciplinary care. Heléni is actively involved in service development, clinical education, and expanding the pharmacist's scope of practice within palliative care.



Dr Andrew Broadbent, Medical Director, Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health

Panel Discussion

Andrew is the Medical Director of the Specialist Palliative Service at Gold Coast Health. He is co-Chair of the Queensland Health Statewide Palliative Care Network, a member of the Queensland Clinical Senate, the Statewide Directors group for Palliative Care in Queensland, Chair of the Clinical Council at Gold Coast Health and is an Honorary Adjunct Associate Professor at Bond University.

He has a long-term interest in developing best practice services through redesign and change. Andrew went to medical school in Dunedin and did physicians training in Sydney. He has a Master of Health Management at the University of New South Wales and has been a Director of Specialist Palliative Services for nearly 20 years in New South Wales (Royal North Shore and Hammondcare) and since 2016 at Gold Coast Health in Queensland.



**Dr Lawrie Palmer, Palliative Medicine Specialist, Modbury Hospital
Panel Discussion**

Dr Lawrie Palmer is a Palliative Medicine Specialist at Modbury Hospital and formerly Medical Head of Unit for Northern Adelaide Palliative Service.

He trained originally in General Practice and also has worked in Emergency Medicine and in the USA in Family Medicine.

He completed training in Palliative Medicine at TQEH in 2003. From 2003-2005 Lawrie was a Senior Consultant in Palliative Medicine at Southern Adelaide Palliative Services based at the Repatriation General Hospital before moving to Modbury to take up the position of Director of Palliative Care in 2005.

In December 2012 he was appointed the Medical Head of Unit- Palliative Care, Northern Adelaide Local Health Network. This regional service in Northern Adelaide, integrates the Modbury and Lyell McEwin Palliative Care Services to form the Northern Adelaide Palliative Service. He also is a Senior Clinical Lecturer at The University of Adelaide Medical School.



**Dr Edward Mantle, Staff Specialist Palliative Care, Gold Coast Health
Panel Discussion**

Dr Edward Mantle is a Staff Specialist in Palliative Medicine at Gold Coast Hospital & Health Service. His career commenced in Canada where he developed a keen interest in Continuous Ambulatory Delivery Device (CADD) plus patient-controlled analgesia (PCA).

Upon moving to Australia in 2012 he became the Clinical Lead/Director of the Palliative Medicine Service for the Cairns Hinterland Hospital Health Service. He developed and introduced procedures and prescribing materials for CADD plus PCA and has promoted their use for pain management in palliative care settings. He is part of a nation-wide BTcP round table working group focused on better understanding and managing BTcP.

During his time in Cairns as both Clinical Lead and Clinical Director he was part of a dedicated interdisciplinary team developing six domains of service across the Region including in-reach and outreach services to Residential Aged Care Facilities and Rural and Remote regions. He has now joined the GCHHS as a staff specialist where his interest continues in developing innovative pain management prescribing tools within digital platforms

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