

New podcast episodes of ‘Ask the Specialist’ focus on Palliative Care

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Three new episodes of Menzies School of Health Research’s (Menzies) multi-award-winning podcast, *Ask the Specialist: Stories to Inspire Better Healthcare*, have been released, focusing on end-of-life care.

Produced by Menzies’ [Communicate Study Partnership](#), the episodes respond to questions from nurses, doctors, and allied health professionals across the Northern Territory (NT), providing practical guidance to support culturally safe palliative care for First Nations patients.

The episodes explore key topics such as the language used when discussing death, the meaning of sorry business, the significance of smoking ceremonies, and how to navigate palliative care choices in a culturally respectful way.

Building on the original seven-episode series, the latest instalments of Menzies’ award-winning podcast, feature insights from respected First Nations leaders.

Yolŋu leader Rarrtjiwuy Melanie Herdman, Warlpiri Elder Jimmy Langdon Japanangka, Arrernte Elder Sabella Turner Kngwarraye, and Arrernte Elder and Ngangkere Amelia Turner Kngwarraye share their cultural knowledge and perspectives, helping to guide healthcare professionals in delivering more culturally safe and responsive palliative care for First Nations patients.

Rarrtjiwuy Melanie Herdman discusses the importance of end-of-life conversations in the podcast:

“Death is in our conversations, in our lives as we grow up; as children we’re exposed to funerals, ceremony, death, palliative care at a very early stage, whereas, I know in the balanda world it’s not a part of introducing that part of life to children.

Knowing that most of our clinicians come from that balanda world, because of their own background and how they understand death, I understand why they may feel uncomfortable or may be asking this question, and how you have that conversation is going to vary.”

Approaching someone’s end of life in a safe, responsive and culturally safe manner is vital to support equitable healthcare. With the original episodes of the podcast found to support positive behaviour change in healthcare professionals, the new episodes aim to promote change in care across the NT.

These episodes have been made possible through a close partnership with Djalkiri Foundation, Purple House and NT Health (Indigenous Program of Experience in the

Palliative Approach – IPEPA NT). It has been supported by the Harry Christian Giese Research Into Action Award 2024 and the Medical Research Future Fund.

The episodes are now available on [Spotify](#) and [Apple Podcasts](#), and can be accessed via the [resources section on the Menzies website](#).

Quotes attributable to Operations Manager Aged Care at Danila Dilba Health Service and Ask the Specialist Podcast Co-host, Kelly Clark:

"I'm so proud of this podcast. As I've been working with Aboriginal people in the palliative area in the Northern Territory, I kept hearing, 'Why do they do this? Why don't they know to do that?' This podcast equips healthcare staff with essential principles and knowledge straight from the heart of our specialists."

Quotes attributable to Territory Palliative Care Medical Director at Alice Springs Hospital and Ask the Specialist Podcast Co-host, Dr Christine Sanderson:

"Talking to people about death and dying is hard in any culture, and we need to get better at it. These Ask the Specialist Podcasts are such a brilliant way to share knowledge and encourage better communication between health care staff and First Nations patients. The Elders in these podcasts have so much wisdom and experience to share, and they just want us to be able to do things better."

Quotes attributable to Menzies School of Health Research Communicate Study Partnership Chief Investigator, Professor Anna Ralph:

"Even for those of us who've worked in the Territory for a while, there's always so much more to learn. Listening to the questions and discussion shared in the podcasts really sparks reflection. The pearls of wisdom shared by the specialists give me new strategies for how I can interact with patients."

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About Menzies School of Health Research

Menzies is at the forefront of health and medical research dedicated to improving the lives of peoples across the Northern Territory, Asia Pacific and beyond. By joining scientific knowledge with community wisdom, Menzies strives to Close the Gap, and shape a healthier, more equitable future where communities can thrive.