



# Supportive Care for the Renal Patient

Editors: E. Joanna Chambers, Michael Germain and Edwina Brown  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
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Reviewed by: Dr Shelley Tranter

Supportive Care for the Renal Patient is one in a series of supportive care textbooks. The text provides the renal professional with much needed information on the care of the patient with renal failure from a different perspective. The editors bring together a number of experts in the field of supportive and palliative care.

Dr Alvin Moss introduces the nine recommended guidelines with regard to decision making about withholding or withdrawing dialysis and the care of patients who are not appropriate for dialysis. These guidelines and a process for ethical decision making provide the basis for the ethics case analysis presented throughout the book. The text is divided into 15 chapters. Chapter titles include initiation and withdrawal of dialysis, the concept of supportive care for the renal patient, planning a palliative care

program, health related quality of life in chronic renal failure and symptoms of renal disease and their management. One symptom we often struggle with is pain and a chapter is dedicated entirely to the management of pain in renal failure. Chapters on the psychological and spiritual care of patients guide the health care professional toward a more holistic approach as we journey with the patient and family. This journey is often long and must involve a multidisciplinary approach. The emphasis is on a continuum of palliative care intervention from diagnosis through to end of life care.

This must have text was published in 2004 but I was only made aware of it by our palliative care consultant who purchased a copy while on a conference overseas. My shelves are full of renal textbooks and I had been meaning to stretch my imagination beyond the usual

nursing care of the dialysis patient and this book has filled the gap. As a clinical nurse consultant, I have begun to realise that most of my clinical work is not what it used to be – teaching nurses to do dialysis. I am still involved in trouble shooting difficult dialysis problems but now the emphasis is more on supporting nurses, patients and families in quality of life and end of life issues.

The book is invaluable for all members of the multidisciplinary team involved in the care of patients requiring renal replacement therapy. The text is also an asset for planning care for the patient managed on a conservative pathway. Keeping patients alive in end stage renal failure is no longer a problem but supporting patients in achieving an optimum quality of life and a peaceful supported end of life is the new challenge.



## The Renal Society of Australasia Journal

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