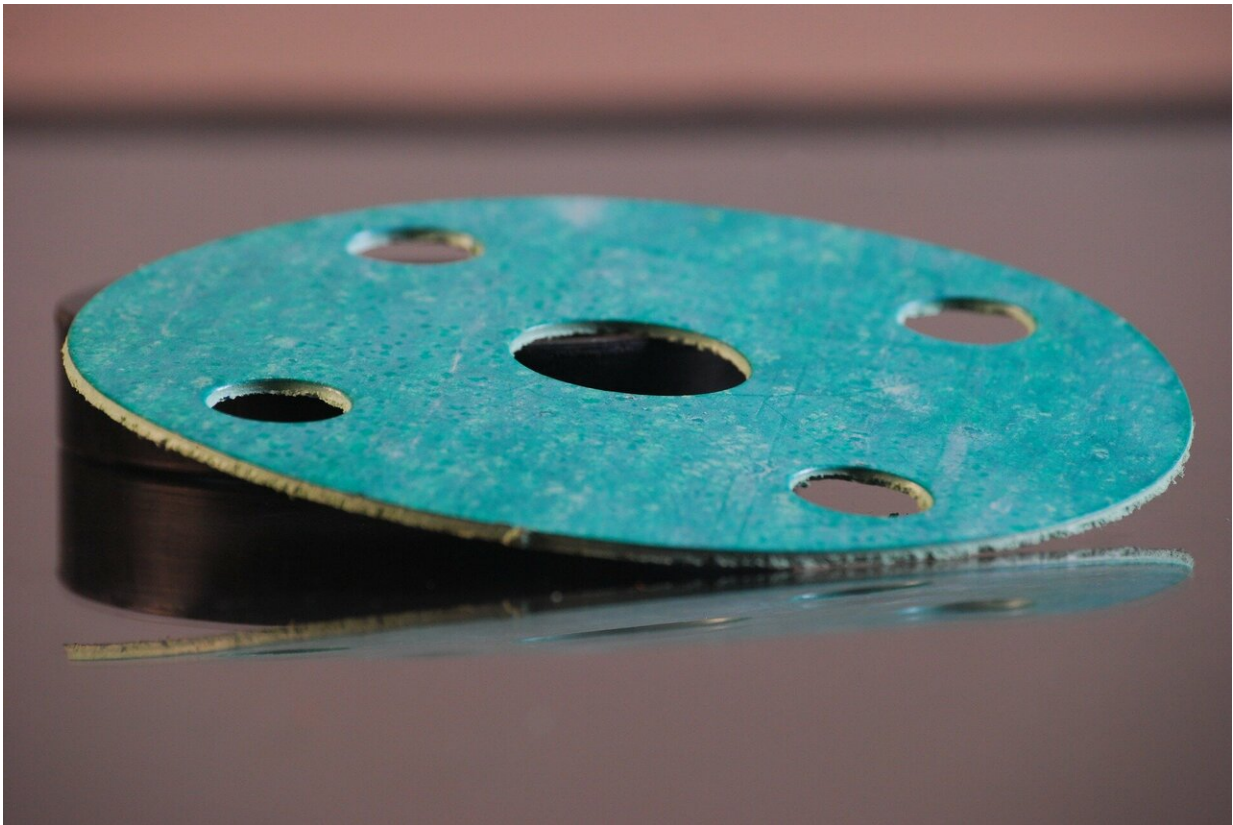


Early palliative care offers no extra benefit for mesothelioma patients

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Early specialist palliative care treatment does not improve the quality of life for patients diagnosed with the rare cancer mesothelioma when compared to standard care alone, new research led by Curtin University

has found.

The research, published in this month's edition of *Thorax*, explored whether early specialist [palliative care](#), which involves managing the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of care, soon after the diagnosis of malignant pleural [mesothelioma](#) (MPM) led to an improved [quality of life](#) and mood for [patients](#) and carers, compared to standard care alone.

Co-author Professor Fraser Brims, from the Curtin Medical School at Curtin University, said malignant pleural mesothelioma was an uncommon cancer of the chest cavity and the lungs caused by exposure to asbestos fibres and affects more than 700 Australians each year.

"The global burden of mesothelioma largely reflects the high use of asbestos throughout the last century, with Australia and the UK having the highest rates in the world. People diagnosed with mesothelioma experience significant symptoms, low quality of life and a low survival rate, and the treatment of mesothelioma remains a significant challenge," Professor Brims said.

"Previous research has shown that patients diagnosed with other types of cancer may benefit from early specialist palliative care, in conjunction with other relevant treatments, but our research aimed to examine if this was also the case for patients with mesothelioma.

"We found that the current level of standard care in Australia and the UK is adequately meeting the needs of patients early after the diagnosis of mesothelioma and specialist palliative care was only required on a case-by-case basis."

Co-author Professor Anoop Chauhan, from Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, explained that the study was the largest randomised controlled trial to date to examine this question in patients with mesothelioma

living in Australia and the UK.

"Our findings may help [health professionals](#), carers and family members to further understand the role of early specialist palliative care when treating mesothelioma and to recognise when it is required and when it is not," Professor Chauhan said.

"Further research is needed to explore which patients and when in their disease trajectory, will most benefit from early specialist palliative care, but it should continue to play a key role in the treatment plan when patients' pain, symptoms, and psychological care are no longer met by standard care alone."

The research, sponsored by Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust and funded by the British Lung Foundation and Australian Communities Grant, was co-authored by researchers from Australia and the UK.

The research paper is titled "Early specialist palliative care on quality of life for [malignant pleural mesothelioma](#): a randomised controlled trial."

More information: Fraser Brims et al. Early specialist palliative care on quality of life for malignant pleural mesothelioma: a randomised controlled trial, *Thorax* (2019). [DOI: 10.1136/thoraxjnl-2018-212380](https://doi.org/10.1136/thoraxjnl-2018-212380)

Provided by Curtin University

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