

## **Why drugs aren't always administered**

Research by pharmacists has shown that people suffering from cancer may not receive certain drugs that have been prescribed by doctors (23/11/99). This research, however, fails to acknowledge legitimate reasons for this omission.

Some people admitted to the Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute will require regular doses of analgesia, anti-emetics and laxatives, while others will require less regular doses. It is often nurses working at the bedside who determine whether or not the drug is required. This decision is made after close consultation with the person who is to receive the medication.

Palliative care nurses are highly skilled, educated practitioners who work closely with people suffering from cancer. Their decisions about the administration of drugs are based on a complex range of factors. In all circumstances, nurses must be able to justify the decision to administer, or not administer, a drug. It would be irresponsible to administer medication simply because it was "ordered by a doctor".

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