

School of Public Health Wednesday Seminar, March 18, 2009

Public Health & Palliative Care

Interest in public health approaches to palliative care appears to be growing. Much of this is because public health thinking opens up broader questions about end of life policy left unaddressed by classical palliative care that focused on providing excellent care, mainly for cancer patients, in the final weeks of life. Public health approaches ask about the range of strategies that should be available to a society rather than just to patients with a particular form of illness, about the preparation that communities and individuals need for making appropriate decisions about end of life care, about developing models that recognise and enhance the informal care that is the context in which professionalised care operates.

On the 16 & 17th Jan 2009 the Inaugural International Public Health and Palliative Care Conference was held in Calicut, Kerala, India. Public health approaches to palliative care in a variety of contexts were shared and the future direction of the movement discussed. This Wednesday lunchtime seminar will include part of the keynote paper on Australian public health approaches that I presented at the conference, and a report on some of the other contributions, particularly from the Indian subcontinent.

Bruce Rumbold

Bruce Rumbold is senior lecturer in the School of Public Health, La Trobe University, and acting director of the Palliative Care Unit based within that School. He is engaged in research and project management addressing spiritual care and health promoting approaches to palliative care.