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Lancet Commission on the Value of Death

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Lancet Commission on the Value of Death

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Executive summary

The story of dying in the 21st century is a story of paradox. COVID-19 has meant people have died the ultimate medicalised deaths, often alone in hospitals with little communication with their families. But in other settings, including in some lower income countries, many people remain undertreated, dying of preventable conditions and without access to basic pain relief. The unbalanced and contradictory picture of death and dying is the basis for the *Lancet* Commission on the Value of Death. Drawing on multidisciplinary perspectives from around the globe, the Commissioners argue that death and life are bound together: without death there would be no life. The Commission proposes a new vision for death and dying, with greater community involvement alongside health and social care services, and increased bereavement support.



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Commission

Report of the *Lancet* Commission on the Value of Death: bringing death back into life

Libby Sallnow, Richard Smith, Sam H Ahmedzai, Afsan Bhadelia, Charlotte Chamberlain, Yali Cong, et al.

The Lancet, Vol. 399, No. 10327, p837-884

Libby Sallnow, Richard Smith, Sam H Ahmedzai, Afsan Bhadelia, Charlotte Chamberlain, Yali Cong et al. 2022.

The Lancet, Vol. 399, No. 10327, P837-884.
The Commission has produced an authoritative, timely, and well-researched and referenced publication:

“The story of dying in the 21st century is a story of paradox. COVID-19 has meant people have died the ultimate medicalised deaths, often alone in hospitals with little communication with their families. But in other settings, including in some lower income countries, many people remain undertreated, dying of preventable conditions and without access to basic pain relief. The unbalanced and contradictory picture of death and dying is the basis for the Lancet Commission on the Value of Death. Drawing on multidisciplinary perspectives from around the globe, the Commissioners argue that death and life are bound together: without death there would be no life. The Commission proposes a new vision for death and dying, with greater community involvement alongside health and social care services, and increased bereavement support.”

Among various recommendations, these resonate particularly strongly for Plenna:

Death literacy—the knowledge and skills that people need to navigate death systems—must be developed for all.
Education on death, dying, and end-of-life care for a person and their family must be integral, substantial, and mandatory in the curriculum of every health and social care student and continuing education for practicing professionals.

‘Value of Death’ website

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