

# Multi-disciplinary Palliative Care education in hospital

## Utilising an embedded palliative care unit to provide clinically relevant teaching

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### Introduction

Palliative care education has been successfully integrated into clinical practice within hospice and community care settings for many years. Hospital teaching programmes often focus on management of disease or reporting of unusual case histories. Hospital education tends to be delivered from within single disciplines to practioners of that discipline. NHS Tayside has recently developed an acute palliative care unit (APCU) within the acute hospital. Alongside this clinical development a strong education programme has been established to provide whole-hospital palliative care teaching utilising a multi-disciplinary approach. This programme has aimed to highlight specific areas that relate to quality of care, improving patient experience and improving patient safety.

### Methods

The APCU provides a focus for palliative care within the hospital setting and facilitates integrated working across specialities and disciplines. The day to day workings of the unit have been utilised to provide on-going education based on real time patient experience. Personnel involved in patient care were given the opportunity to suggest topics for teaching and to highlight areas of need. A programme has been developed based on consensus discussion within the hospital palliative care team and from topics highlighted through the APCU.

### Results

Three main areas were highlighted through discussion:

- Symptom management
- Communication
- Ethics

These topics have been addressed through the educational model outlined opposite:

- Clinical events utilised to generate case histories or teaching topics
- We aim to develop programmes working with other specialities e.g. Oncology and ENT

#### Modes of teaching:

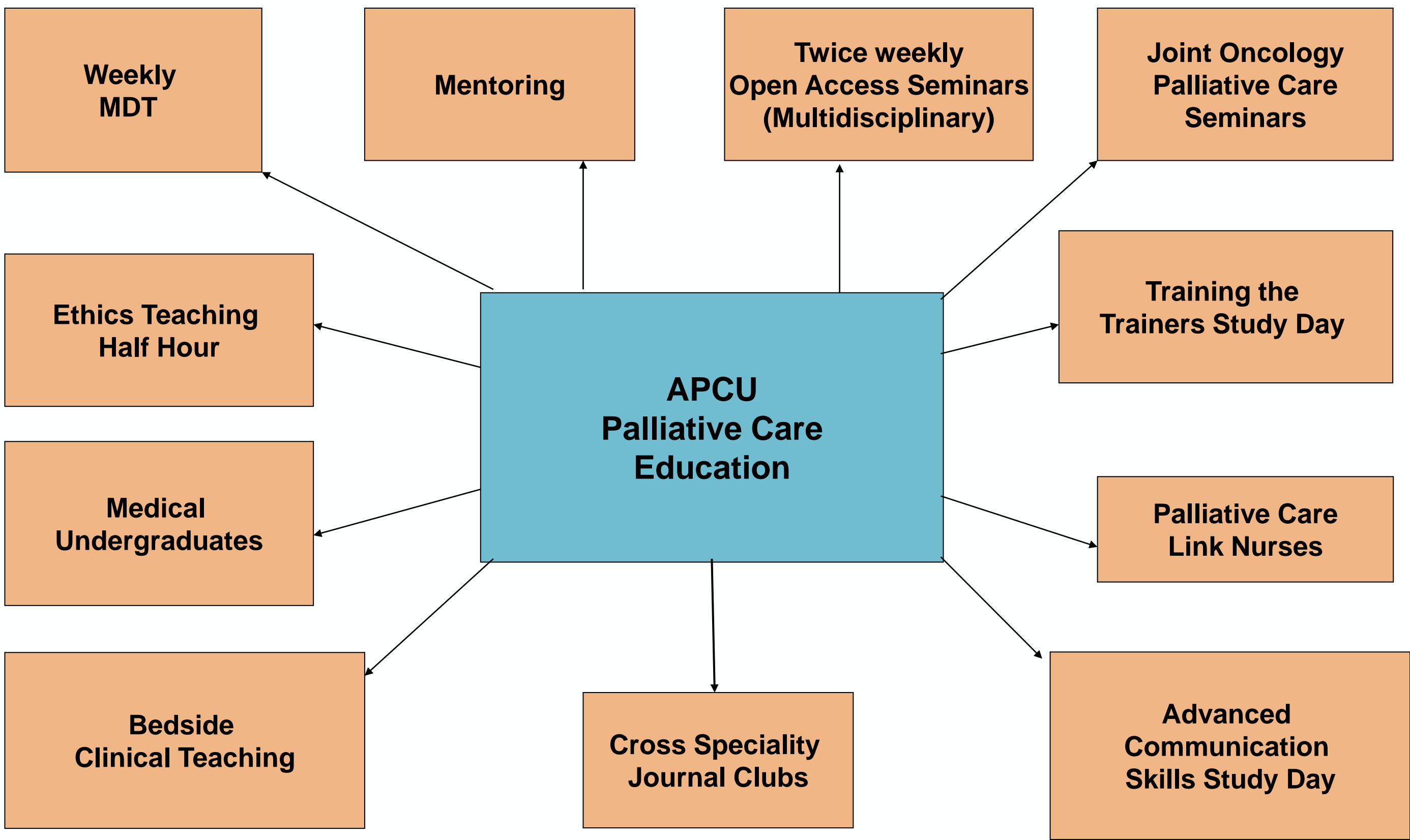
- 1.Open access multi-disciplinary tutorials
- 2.Open MDT meeting with case identified for fortnightly 'Ethics half hour'
- 3.Ethics discussion fortnightly highlighting real issues from APCU
- 4.Cross speciality rotation with clinical experience gained through APCU
- 5.Development of ward based link nurses for palliative care and palliative education
- 6.Development of cross specialty tutorials
- 7.Undergraduate teaching through Medical school

#### Increasing attendance through increased frequency of seminars shows need and desire for teaching.

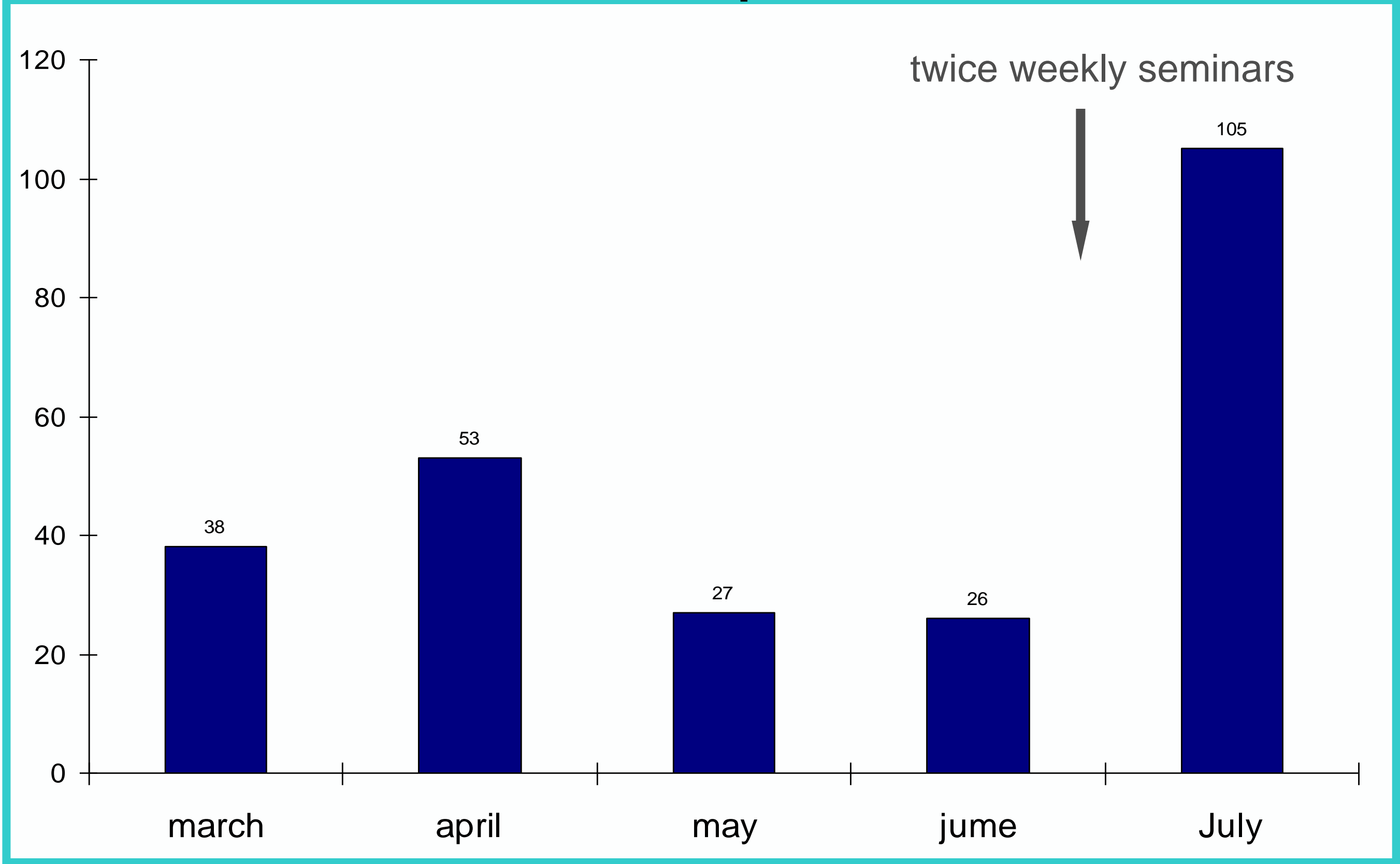
(Graph of attendance shown opposite)

#### Some topics identified for teaching:

- |                             |                                     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| •Talking to relatives       | •Symptom control                    |
| •Respecting patient Dignity | •Ethics                             |
| •End of life care           | •Resuscitation                      |
| •Neuropathic pain           | •Breaking bad news                  |
| •Complex pain               | •Oncology/palliative care interface |



Bar chart of attendance of palliative care tutorials



### Discussion

An acute palliative care unit provides an embedded, physical focus of palliative care within the acute setting. Building on this visible presence, a broad educational programme has been developed. The attendance at open access seminars has demonstrated a desire and need for education on the topics identified. Utilising real patient scenarios has helped maintain clinical relevance of the teaching provided and promotes an educational ethos within daily clinical practice. The teaching was multi-disciplinary and was attended by doctors, nurses, healthcare assistants, pharmacists, social workers, radiotherapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists.

The APCU has allowed this programme to expand and to integrate into hospital life across specialties and disciplines over a short period of time.

### Conclusions

- There is a need and desire for palliative care education in hospitals
- Multidisciplinary education can be delivered and can enrich the learning experience
- An APCU can provide a hub for an educational programme and clinically relevant teaching material