

Relaxation Outpatient Clinic

Prospective Evaluation of the first 9 months (September 2008 to May 2009)



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Background

Gentle massage, holistic aromatherapy and creative relaxation techniques are increasingly recognised as an important part of palliative care (Tavares, 2003). For a number of years, these therapies have been integrated into the care of patients within the in-patient unit and day care. To offer these therapies to the community patient and their relative a Clinic, based at the Strathcarron Hospice, was developed with the aim of increasing coping skills by easing physical discomfort and reducing anxiety. A **key element** of the service was to empower the relative and patient by demonstrating and teaching comforting/relaxation techniques that they can continue to use at home.

Aims

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of community patients and their relatives attending two sessions at the Clinic.

Method

- The CNS referred patient to the Complementary Therapy Team.
- Full assessment carried out so needs of patient and relative could be identified and therapies adapted to patient's condition.
- A questionnaire was given to both the patient and relative at the end of the **initial** appointment at the Clinic with instruction to return the form to Clinical Effectiveness Coordinator a week after their session.

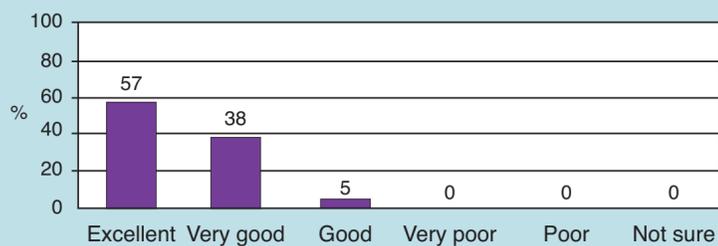
Findings

First attendance at the Clinic:

- Patients 28
- Relatives 11
- Bereaved 4
- Home visits 6 (no questionnaire given)

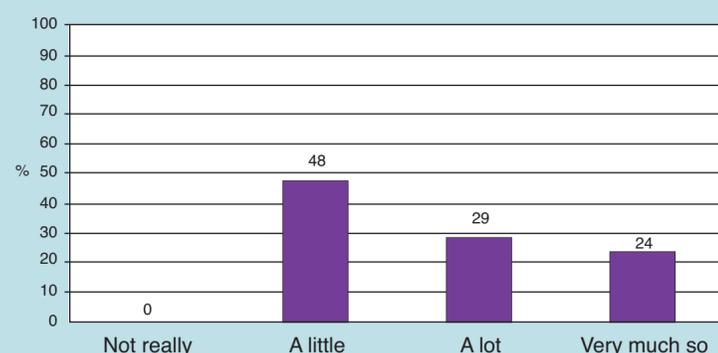
In total 43 questionnaires were given out with 21 being returned (49% response rate).

How would you rate your experience of attending the relaxation outpatient clinic?



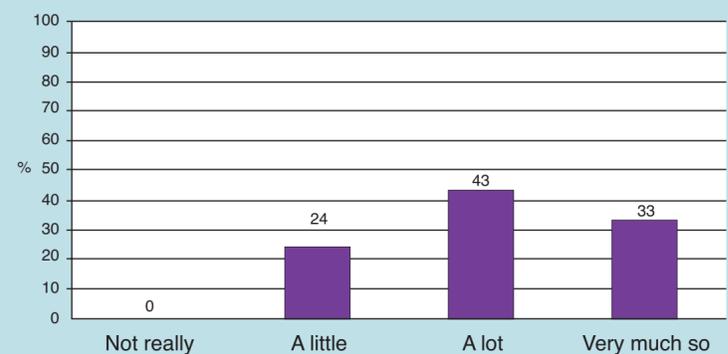
Comment from patients included "warm relaxing atmosphere putting me quickly at ease" and "soothing and peaceful".

Do you feel that attending this clinic has helped you cope?



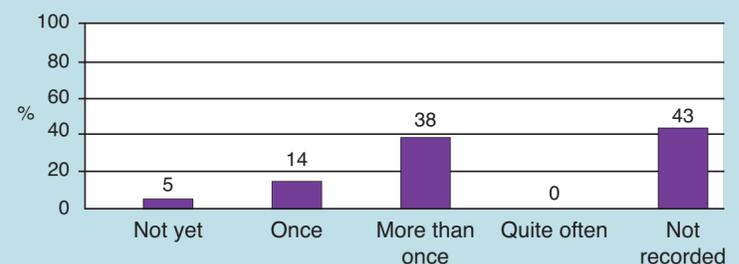
Comments such as, "I have a much more relaxed attitude to everyday situations" and "the therapy itself is good and as part of a 'support system' it's what I need." A comment from a bereaved relative - "feels this clinic should be offered on a regular basis to people who are bereaved as it would be of great benefit."

Do you feel that attending has helped you find ways of relaxing?



Comments such as "different approaches to problems help you when other things have failed" highlighted the perceived effectiveness of the relaxation techniques experienced.

Since attending the relaxation out patients clinic have you used the relaxation CD to help with relaxation at home?



"This CD helps to calm my mind for a short while, which really helps." "I use it every night to go to sleep and even when I waken through the night it helps." One relative commented on what she had learned at the clinic and she used the cd to help her husband when he was feeling anxious or in discomfort.

Conclusions

Bringing the patient and relative to the Clinic:

- Has increased coping skills of patient and relatives.
- Was the best use of available resources.
- Acted as a 'stepping stone' between community and hospice as patient and relative had an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the Hospice facilities whilst at the Clinic.

With increased resources this could be an integrated part of the care of patients and relatives within the community.

Limitations of Evaluation

- Small number of respondents.
- CNS "gatekeeper" of patients referred – therefore referrals to the Clinic depended on the CNS's assessment of patient/relative need.

Reference

Tavares M (2003) National Guidelines for the Use of Complementary Therapies in Supportive and Palliative Care. The Prince's Foundation for Integrated Health, London.