

'Exploring Community Nurses' lived experiences and perceptions of 'preparedness' to provide palliative and end of life care in rural Scotland: a qualitative study protocol'

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Background

Within Scotland, Palliative and End of Life Care (PEOLC) research has steadily grown although a paucity of research on remote and rural contexts exists (Finucane *et al.* 2018). Increasingly, patients in Scotland are favouring their own homes as their preferred place of death leading to increased Palliative and End of Life Care (PEOLC) delivery by generalist Community Nursing Teams. In remote and rural areas, generalist nurses will provide most terminal care even in complex cases due to lack of specialist service provision or resources locally. However, the experience of Community Nurses providing PEOLC in a rural context, is poorly documented and lacks insight into what prepares this group to provide such care.

This research aims to help conceptualise 'preparedness' for PEOLC delivery amongst rural community nurses and seeks to provide new insights into experiences of PEOLC by generalist nurses and will provide in-depth understanding of the professional development and support needs of rural generalist nurses. Findings will inform the future development of skills and competencies frameworks, ensuring consideration of relevancy to rural practitioners (figure 1).



Figure 1 – Enriching and Improving Framework for PEOLC (NHS Education for Scotland 2017)

Research Questions

- What are community nurses lived experiences and perceptions of preparedness to care for people with palliative and EOL care needs living in rural settings?
- How do these experiences and perceptions of preparedness influence current PEOLC care practices?
- How does prior exposure to PEOLC, alongside experiences and perceptions of preparedness, shape professional development and support needs?

Study Design

- A qualitative phenomenological study using in-depth semi-structured interviews will gather detailed accounts of the lived experiences of nurses to derive key themes and commonalities across rural community nurses.
- Sampling will be purposeful with participants sought from community nurses with varying years of experience and geographical location.
- Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) will be used to analyse the data to derive experiential statements and themes. The process is iterative in nature with reflexive notes being taken by researcher throughout.

Information

- Interview schedule currently in development prior to NHS ethical approval submission
- Following approval, it is hoped that data collection will be commenced in late Summer 2024
- The study is funded as part of an educational grant awarded by the RCN Foundation

References:

- Finucane, A., Carduff, E., Lugton, J., Fenning, S., Johnston, B., Fallon, M., Clark, D., Spiller, J. and Murray, S. (2018) 'Palliative and end-of-life care research in Scotland 2006-2015: a systematic scoping review'. *BMC Palliative Care* [online] 17 (1), 19.
- NHS Education for Scotland. (2017) Palliative and End of Life Care: Enriching and Improving Experience [online]. Edinburgh: *NHS Education for Scotland*