STAFF PERSPECTIVES REGARDING DELIRIUM CARE IN TWO HOSPICE INPATIENT UNITS

Anne Finucane[1,2], Elizabeth Arnold[2], Hilary Nailon[2], Alasdair MacLullich[3], Juliet Spiller[2]

[1]***Clinical Psychology,*** University of Edinburgh, UK. [2]***Marie Curie Hospice Edinburgh,*** Edinburgh, UK.
[3]***Deanery of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Science,*** University of Edinburgh, UK.

Background

- Delirium is a serious and distressing condition which commonly affects people with life-limiting illness.
- Between one-quarter and one-third of patients admitted to hospice inpatient units have symptoms of delirium.[1]
- We sought to implement a range of initiatives to improve delirium care in two hospice inpatient units. To inform this work we first sought to understand current delirium knowledge and practices.

Aim

To investigate staff knowledge, confidence, and training needs regarding the care of terminally ill patients with delirium in two hospice inpatient units.

Method

We developed a questionnaire consisting of closed and free-text questions, administered online. Eligible respondents included nurses, doctors, health care assistants and allied health professionals based in two hospice inpatient units.

Results

- In total 45 participants were recruited – Site A = 22, Site B = 23. *(20 nurses, 10 doctors, 10 healthcare assistants and 5 allied health professionals)*.
- Nearly all participants correctly identified delirium risk factors and causes.
- 53% correctly identified the prevalence of delirium on admission to an inpatient unit. *(Figure 1)*
- Delirium detection tools were routinely used by one-third of respondents, with Site B staff more likely to routinely use a delirium detection tool. This was because both doctors and nurses administered the tool at Site B, compared to doctors only at Site A. The 4AT was most used. *(Figure 2)*
- 41% agreed that they had received adequate training in delirium care. *(Figure 3)*

Figure 1: Perceptions of prevalence of delirium on admission to hospice inpatient unit (N=45)

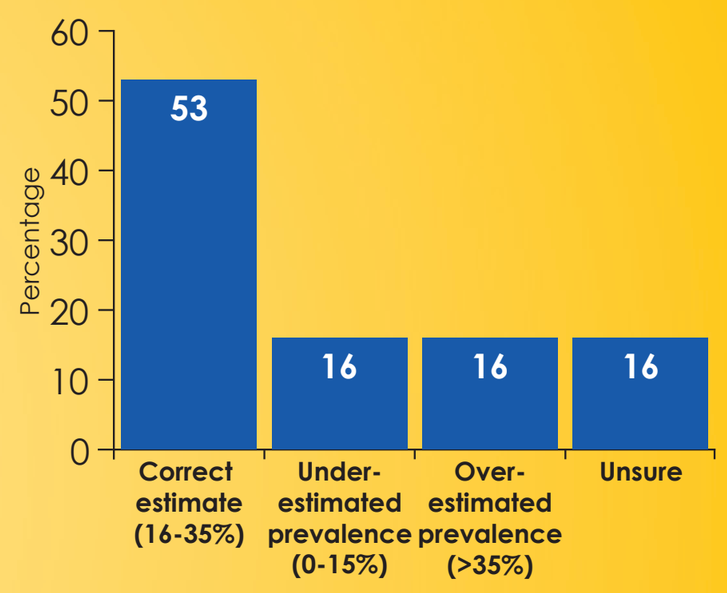
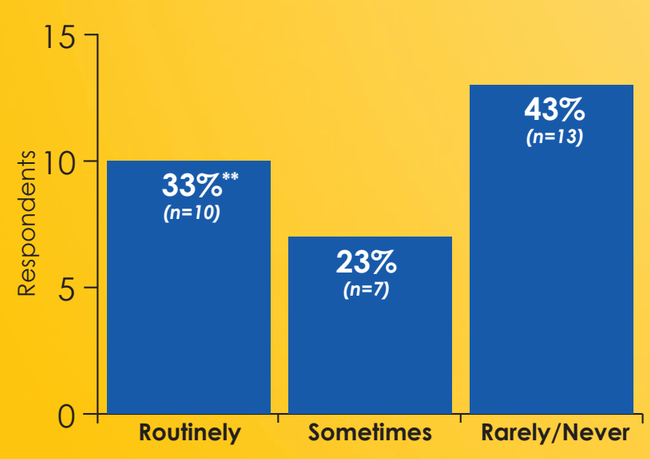
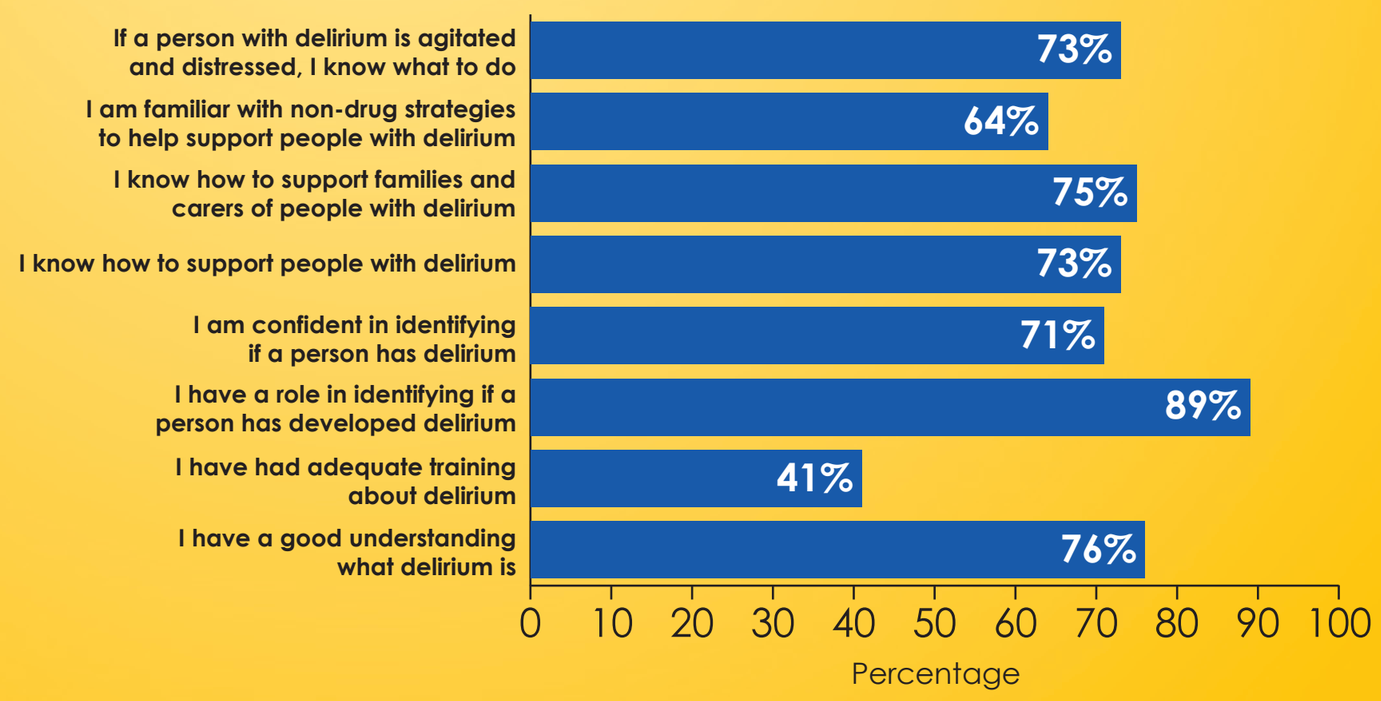


Figure 2: Do you use delirium detection tools? (N=30)*



**Only doctor and nurse respondents were asked this question.*
***Percentages add to 99% due to rounding.*

Figure 3: Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree with the following statements (N=45)



Conclusion

Further training and the development of resources to support staff to provide high quality delirium care in hospice inpatient units is recommended.

Reference: [1]Watt CL, Momoli F, Ansari MT, Sikora L, Bush SH, Hosie A, et al. The incidence and prevalence of delirium across palliative care settings: A systematic review. Palliative medicine. 2019;33(8):865-77.

Contact: Anne Finucane: Anne.Finucane@mariecurie.org.uk
Marie Curie Hospice Edinburgh, 45 Frogston Road, Edinburgh EH10 7DR.

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