

The Provision of Anticipatory Care Plans (ACPs) in Care Homes in the North of Scotland and Recommendations for Improvement

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Introduction

This audit provides assessment of the provision of Anticipatory Care Plans (ACPs) in the six care homes aligned with Nairn Healthcare Group, a flagship practice in the North of Scotland.

The benefits of anticipatory care are particularly important in care homes, where many patients have multiple morbidities and illness trajectories that will deteriorate over time. This group of people are some of the most vulnerable in our society and are at high risk of being inappropriately admitted to hospital, at considerable cost to the health care service and often not in accordance with their own preferences.

The anticipatory care planning initiative can therefore help to provide a more patient-centred care of patients in the care home setting, in order to reduce unnecessary hospitalisation and improve the quality of treatment for people in the last stages of life.

Methods

Identification of 169 patients in the six care homes aligned with the practice was conducted through computer search on Vision software of 25/07/2012.

Patient records were checked to identify whether an up-to-date Anticipatory Care Plan was in place.

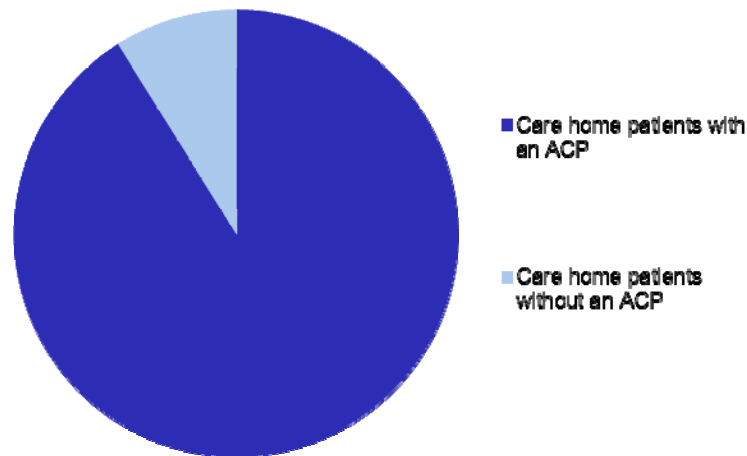


Figure 1: Pie chart to show proportion of care home patients with an up-to-date Anticipatory Care Plan

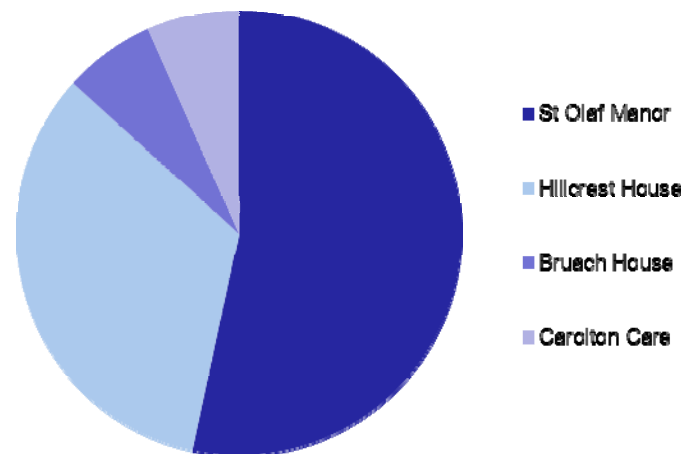


Figure 2: Pie chart to show proportion of patients by care home without an up-to-date Anticipatory Care Plan

Results

Of the 169 patients in the six care homes aligned with Nairn Healthcare Group, 154 patients (91%) had an ACP in place. 15 patients (9%) did not have a documented ACP. The majority of these patients belonged to St Olaf which provide care for patients with dementia as part of its remit, or Hillcrest House which have a number of young adults with mental health problems.

Discussion

The present study found that a high standard of anticipatory care is provided to care home residents aligned with Nairn Healthcare Group as the majority of patients had an ACP in place.

However, deficiencies in the anticipatory care of younger, mental health patients and patients suffering from dementia were identified. The principles of anticipatory care apply equally to patients with dementia and every effort must be made to help individuals make these decisions at an early stage.

In addition, guidelines for anticipatory care are embedded within a framework of general models for palliative care, which are not sufficient to address the unique needs of persons with severe and enduring mental health issues. This audit has therefore highlighted the need for further work to improve initiatives for this patient group with regards to anticipatory care planning.