

Palliative Care education for Clinical Fellows – an unmet need

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Background:

As a Hospital Palliative Care Team (HPCT) we identified a need for palliative care education and training for Clinical Fellows (CFs) working in acute surgical wards. These posts are relatively new and there was no existing infrastructure of palliative care training in these roles. These colleagues are often the first medical presence on the surgical wards and frequently encounter patients with palliative care needs.

Aim:

Deliver palliative care training to CFs working in surgical wards in an acute hospital, leading to improved competence and confidence in management of patients with palliative care needs.

Method:

- 1 • Need for palliative care training identified through HPCT interactions with CFs in surgical wards
- 2 • Discussion with CF supervisor confirmed no specific palliative care training
- 3 • Consultation with CFs - clear wish expressed for palliative care training
- 4 • Topics chosen in discussion with CF representatives
- 5 • HPCT led tutorials
- 6 • Feedback from CFs informed plans for subsequent tutorials

Results:

- Positive feedback after tutorials
- Feedback suggests increased confidence in symptom management at end of life
- Prior to tutorials not all were aware of Scottish Palliative Care Guidelines – post tutorials all knew how to find Scottish Palliative Care Guidelines as initial step
- Request for further teaching, particularly relating to communication skills needed in palliative and end of life care



Conclusions:

- Important to consider palliative care training for staff who do not have access to existing training and the opportunity to positively impact patient care
- Taking training opportunities to where they are needed – flexibility and responsiveness is key
- Example of specialist palliative care supporting wider system across multiple domains
- Indirectly improves general capacity around palliative care and encourages palliative care based on need not diagnosis

Next Steps:

Based on feedback from CFs plan for a further tutorial centred around communication skills when caring for patients and families with palliative care needs.