

Growing a Research Team within a hospice setting



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BACKGROUND

In 2013, Help the Hospices published "Research in Palliative Care: Can hospices afford not to be involved"¹. This publication highlighted the importance of conducting research in hospices. More recently, the Palliative and End of Life Care Priority Setting Partnership² identified ten research priorities for end of life care. Motivated by these recent reports, and having an awareness of the need for evidence-based interventions in palliative care, we wanted to establish research as priority at our hospice.

OBJECTIVE

To develop a research team and research-ready workforce that enables the hospice to participate in ethical and robust research to underpin the provision of optimal holistic care and inform service delivery.

HOW WE GREW

FOUNDATIONS

- Establishing a research group and research group agenda
- Scheduling monthly meetings and developing the structure of meetings
- Commitment of individual members and the wider organisation
- Establishing roles and responsibilities of research group members including:
 - Research Lead
 - Research Nurse
 - Research representatives for clinical areas

GROWTH

- Identification and development of individual roles and responsibilities in line with the research group work plan
- Funding and secondment of Research Nurse post
- Development of research policy and procedure including training needs of research staff
- Identification and completion of training for research group members in
 - Good Clinical Practice (GCP)
 - Valid Informed Consent
- Development of specific competencies for Non Medical Professionals Receiving Valid Informed Consent for Research
- Delivering training and education to 120 clinical staff members directly involved in studies
- Recognition of the research team's wider responsibilities in relation to sharing evidence to support best practice (e.g. Journal Clubs) and not merely partaking in studies.
- Members of the research team are actively recruiting into studies
- Job description statements have been formalised, incorporating research roles and responsibilities.

THE WAY FORWARD

- Ongoing recognition that the research team is a whole hospice initiative
- Progress and development should be self-perpetuating; the structure and foundations should ensure continuity if key members were to leave the group
- Continued identification and development of clinical staff in relation to research-specific training
- Awareness that research and the need to evidence service delivery is the responsibility of every organisational team member and should be embedded in our day-to-day practice and thinking.

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References:

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