Learning to care for the dying: a UK pilot project

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FUTURE HEALTH CARE NEEDS:
PALLIATIVE MEDICINE

• Increasing elderly population
  • Proportion of UK population > 75 years: 7.9% to 13% in 2037
  • Number of people > 80 years set to double: 3m to 6.1m in 2037

• 36% of hospital patients are identified as having palliative care needs
  • 1 in 10 patients in teaching / general hospitals at any given time will die during first admission.
  • 1 in 3 patients will have died a year later, rising to 1 in 2 for the oldest groups.

• F1 Doctors will care for 40 dying patients and a further 120 in the last months of life

1. UK population: how will it change over the next few decades? [http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2013/nov/06/uk-population-increase-births-migration]
5. Association for Palliative Medicine Special Interest Forum –Undergraduate Medical Education meeting. [www.apmuesif.phc.cam.ac.uk/userfiles/Review%20for%20Association%20for%20Palliative%20Medicine%20Special%20Interest%20Forum%202014%20meeting%20in%20Liverpool.pdf]
CURRENT UNDERGRADUATE TRAINING

- Undergraduate Education Palliative Medicine
  - Mean hours:
    - 36 (2013) - range from 7 to 98 hours Walker et al., 2014 - Palliative Care Congress
  - Hours have increased but effects unknown…
    - In at least 4 medical schools (13%), it was possible for some students to go through the entire course without meeting a PC patient.
• **COMPETENCE**

  • **Tomorrow’s Doctors**
    • Specifically: 14 (J) “Contribute to the care of Patients and their families at the end of life… …management of symptoms… …effective communication… teamworking.”
    • Mapping of APM Curriculum: 8.b.c; 9.c.f; 13.b.f.g; 14.j; 15.a.c; 20.d; 22.a; 23.b.i.

  • **Neuberger Review:**
    • 10 GMC should review whether adequate education and training is currently provided at undergraduate and postgraduate levels to ensure competence
    • 35 HEE should pay particular attention to the pressing need for more evidence based education in all settings.
    • 11 The NIHR should as a matter of priority fund research into the development and evaluation of education and training methods.
• Aims:
  1. pilot the assessment of the preparedness of newly qualified doctors to practice palliative medicine;
  2. identify the provision of training in care of the dying post Neuberger/One to get it right.
ASSESSING PREPAREDNESS


i. Self Efficacy in Palliative Care scale (SEPC).
   - Communication
   - Symptom Management (Pain and Symptoms)
   - Multi-professional Teamwork.
     - GMC – TD 14 (J) “Contribute to the care of Patients and their families at the end of life… …management of symptoms… …effective communication…… teamworking.”

ii. Thanatophobia Scale
   i. Attitudes towards caring for dying patients

Sample:
   - Newly qualified doctors (n=40) from 2 medical schools with low, moderate and high number of hours of compulsory teaching
• Nationally: examine existing content and proposed changes in response to “One Chance”
Expected Outcomes:

1. Pilot evidence on the effect of the extent/content of training against preparedness to practice.
   - Development of electronic platform for assessment

2. National review of current and/planned undergraduate training, specifically in the care of dying patients

3. Feedback for the GMC for future policy and versions of Tomorrow’s Doctors
   - Potential for national assessment; potential for parallel/complementary qualitative assessment
SUMMARY

• **Need:** F1 Doctors will care for 40 dying patients and a further 120 in the last months of life

• **Neuberger / One Chance:** GMC should review whether adequate education and training is currently provided … …to ensure competence

• **Research:**
  • Pilot Study on Preparedness;
  • Changes to the curriculum post “One Chance”

• **Opportunity:**
  • Develop a simple format for national assessment;
    • potential to be supplemented with qualitative approaches;
    • Review specific elements of training
  • Provide evidence to facilitate greater inclusion and representation of palliative, end of life and care of the dying within current curricula.