

End-of-Life specific and development needs of staff working in primary, community and secondary care.

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Background / Objectives

Caring for people at the end-of-life can be one of the most important and rewarding areas of care. To ensure good quality end-of-life care for patients and their families it is important to ensure that healthcare staff have the relevant knowledge and skills. This study aims to identify the current self-reported end-of-life care knowledge and skills of staff working within end-of-life care.

Methods

A quantitative Likert based survey building on the East Midlands Evaluation Tool (EMET) and recent national guidelines, has been developed in collaboration with a local end-of-life steering group of clinicians and managers. The questionnaire aimed to scope the current level of skills and knowledge as well as learning and development needs of the workforce.

Using census sampling, n=190 health care professionals (HCPs) from a Clinical Commissioning Group wide health community, spanning primary, community and secondary care, were identified. The survey was sent electronically to individuals, over a six week period in September 2017. Healthcare professionals were asked to score questions across 9 sections from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree". Responses were categorised using a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating to indicate areas where further action may be needed. In addition, the survey included 4 questions around systems and capacity to support patients in place and training received in the last 2 years.

Results

Systems to support patients:

Overall, the majority of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that there were *Good systems in place to support patients* (88%), and felt able to *Provide high quality care and support* (84%). However, two questions received lower ratings:

- Perceptions of how well primary and secondary care services work together (66% strongly agreed or agreed)
- Availability of patients' medical history and treatment (64% strongly agreed or agreed)

End-of-life specific and communication skills:

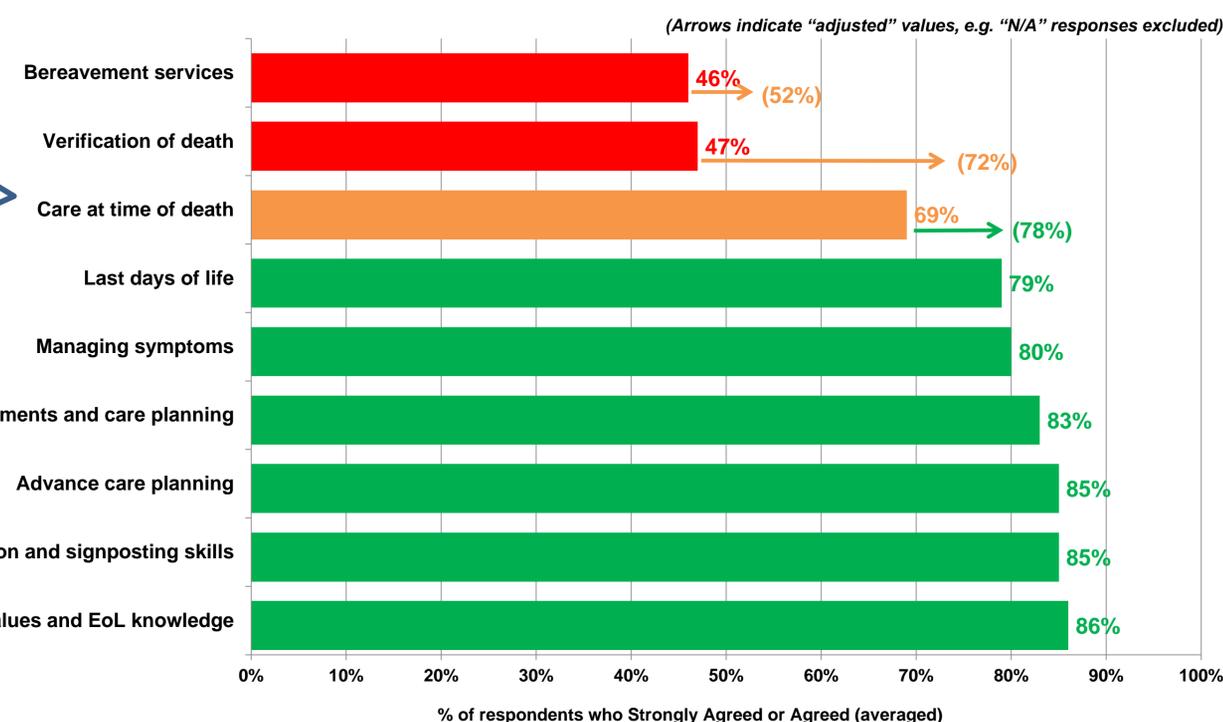
The findings demonstrate that respondents had a high level of confidence in their knowledge and skills in most questions, however, the *Use of registers and end-of-life care assessment tools* questions received amber ratings (68%).

Knowledge and end-of-life care priorities:

Questions within each of these sections: *Care at time of death; Verification of death; and Bereavement services* received lower ratings ("adjusted" values exclude responses that were "not applicable" to respondents):

- Use of bereavement assessment tools and onward referral (30%; 36% when adjusted)
- Competence to confirm death and in line with end-of-life policies (41%; 69% when adjusted)
- Confidence in providing culturally sensitive last offices (59%; 69% when adjusted)

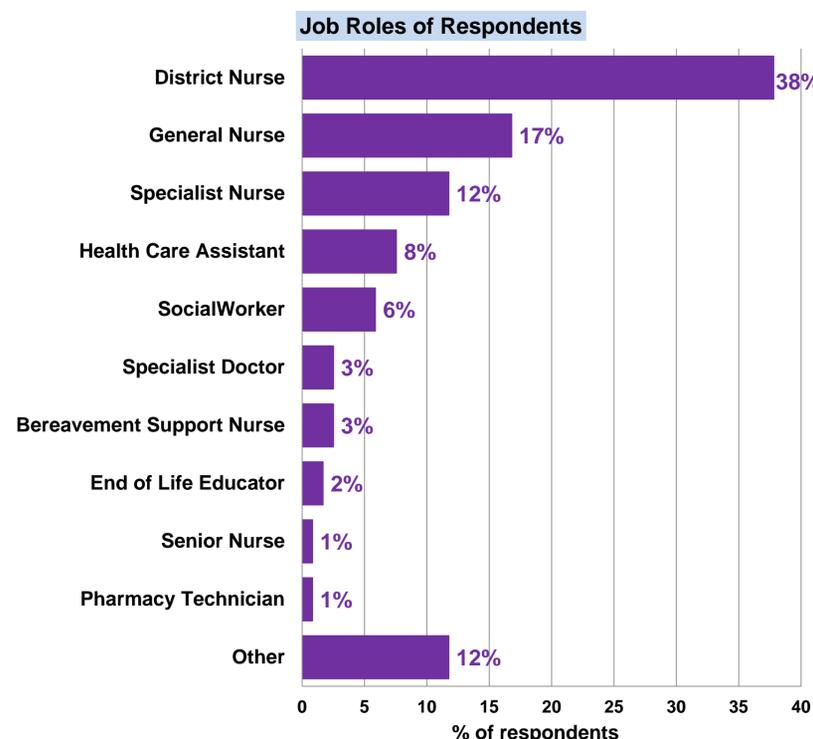
Summary of responses per survey section (average score shown below – i.e. each section included multiple questions)



Conclusions

The responses provide the local end-of-life steering group with a baseline assessment of the current perceived confidence and knowledge around end-of-life care, and allow areas of less confidence to be targeted in training and education planning. Future work includes a follow-up with this population, and roll out of the survey across the North West region.

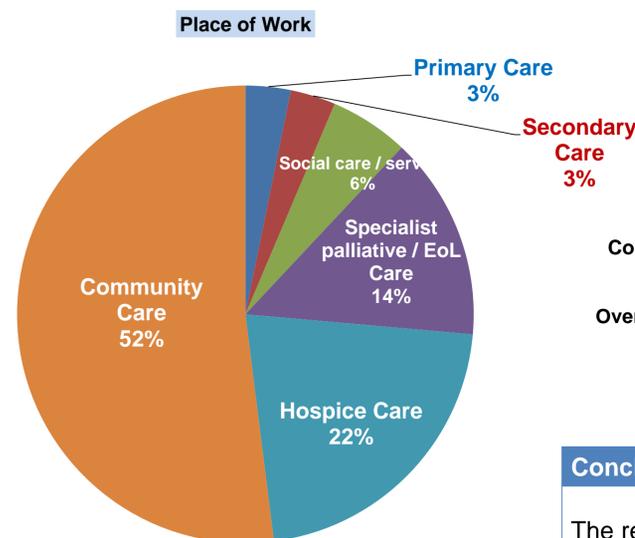
60% (n=114)
of the targeted workforce responded to the survey



Red, Amber, Green (RAG) categorisation

Green ≥ 75% Amber 51-74% Red ≤ 50%

Green: high confidence, knowledge or skills
Amber: need to investigate training in these areas
Red: substantial need for further development or training



*Other: Pharmacy Technician; Macmillan End of Life Care Educator; Primary Care Nurse; Clinical Lead Macmillan 1:1 Support Service (OT HCPC Registered); Spiritual care and Bereavement Support Nurse; Practice Development Facilitator; Physiotherapist; Palliative and End of life Care education facilitator; Care manager; Senior health care assistant; Care coordinator; Assistant Director of Nursing for Palliative, bereavement & EOLC; EOLC/Bereavement Specialist Nurse