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LONDON



# Mobilising knowledge in palliative and end of life care services through Circles of Learning

*Marsha Dawkins*  
*Clinical Research Fellow*  
*marsha.j.dawkins@kcl.ac.uk*

Cicely Saunders Institute for Palliative Care,  
Policy and Rehabilitation

# Background

Palliative care funding review 2011

- To create a fair and transparent funding system
- To provide better outcomes for patients
- To provide better value for the NHS

Outcome Assessment and Complexity Collaborative (OACC) led by Cicely Saunders Institute

NHS England & Public Health England have piloted a subset OACC outcome measures

No guidance on how knowledge about outcomes data could be mobilised

# Aims:

- To explore how palliative care services currently use patient-level outcome measures in practice
- To test whether and how Circles of Learning can contribute to effective knowledge sharing about outcomes



# What are 'circles of learning'?



# Methods

A multi-method qualitative study across two voluntary sector hospices (inpatient and community) and two NHS palliative care services

- **Phase 1:** exploration of use of OMs and establishing CoL within one hospital and one hospice service
- **Phase 2:** adaptation of findings from Phase 1 to inform how CoL were established within the next sites

# Methods

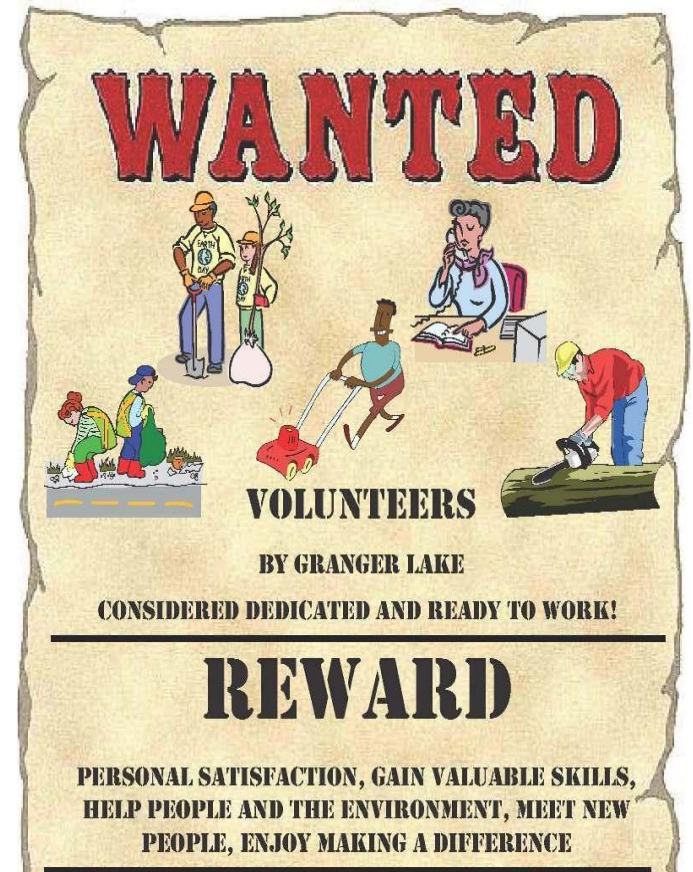
Data collection parallel throughout Phase 1 & 2 including;

- semi-structured interviews
- participant and non-participant observations of MDT, research and audit meetings
- focus groups
- monthly onsite Learning Circle meetings; process evaluation following Learning Circle meetings

# Participants

35 practicing palliative care health care professionals working across multiple disciplines

- doctors (n=7)
- nurses (n=18)
- chief executive (n=1)
- health care assistants (n=4)
- psychological therapy staff (n=2)
- service leads (n=3)



# Results

- Interviews (n=8)
- Participant/non-participant observations (n=45)
- Focus groups (3; participants = 15)
- CoL meetings (15)



# Results

- Monthly CoL were successfully established and sustained at 3 sites but with limited reliance on research evidence
- One hospital team participated in Phase I only
- Progress within one hospital team was restricted by information technology
- The level of readiness to utilise outcome measures varied
- OMs were used variably across all sites; sometimes to inform clinical decisions

# Results

- Different disciplines engaged with OMs differently
- CoL approach is valuable to support knowledge-sharing across disciplines
- Participants actively sought the experience of practitioners both within and external to their organisation to inform knowledge sharing strategies
- Participants valued the opportunity to share their knowledge and build individual capacity

# Summary

- Learning Circles are an effective way for palliative care teams to harness collective knowledge and experiences of practitioners and has been effective in supporting knowledge sharing within and across organisations
- Replacement of hierarchical groupings with multidisciplinary Learning Circles helps to build individual capacity and support learning in the use of outcome measures
- Wider organisational issues may invalidate what Learning Circles can offer.

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# Reflections/ Questions?

