

Method Funding from the Scottish Art Council enabled a Hospice to work with two poets facilitating five poetry reading sessions and seven creative writing sessions. All sessions were co-facilitated by a clinical nurse specialist in palliative care. The poetry reading sessions included a poet reading a wide range of poetry, including requests from patients. After each poem space was created for patients to respond to the poems and discussion was encouraged. The creative writing sessions were facilitated by a poet who assisted patients with writing their own poems through providing a prompt and structure for the writing. A specific focus was chosen for each session, for example 'places we know', 'houses we have lived in, and 'favourite objects'. Each session lasted for one and a half hours. The sessions were evaluated by staff and patients.

Results 25 patients attended one or more than one session with staff members attending poetry reading sessions. Patients' and staffs' comments on the sessions were themed into: positive occupation, bringing back memories, sharing of stories and fostering dialogue.

Conclusion Creative writing and poetry within palliative care provides an alternative approach to communication that facilitates social interaction and 'sharing of stories' that may otherwise not occur. This alternative approach to communication provides common ground and a unique way for the patients to connect with each other.

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POETRY AND CREATIVE WRITING IN PALLIATIVE CARE: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO COMMUNICATION

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Aim of project To explore whether participating in poetry reading and/or creative writing sessions within a hospice has a positive impact on patients.