

Over 100 000 volunteers are currently within the hospice movement – contributing more than 18 million hours of work to their services each year yet they remain a largely under-researched group.

Aims

- ▶ This study hopes to give this under researched group the opportunity to share their experiences with the Hospice and prospective volunteers
- ▶ To understand the motivating factors for patient contact volunteers
- ▶ To explore the experiences of those volunteers
- ▶ To understand the profile of the volunteers, to aid future recruitment of new volunteers and target training and support.

Methods

- ▶ Qualitative study of the experiences of patient contact volunteers using semi structured interviews
- ▶ Ethics approval granted from Edge Hill University Ethics committee and the Integrated Hospice Governance Group
- ▶ Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used.

Results

- ▶ 8 semi structured interviews conducted
- ▶ Volunteers are drawn to hospice work to make a difference
- ▶ Primary motivation is to discover more about themselves and others
- ▶ Relatively few negative challenges encountered
- ▶ Any negatives are cancelled out by the positive benefits gained
- ▶ Capacity for personal growth is strengthened
- ▶ Generic knowledge of symptoms would benefit the support they give.

Conclusions

- ▶ Volunteering is a two way process
- ▶ The 'Psychological Contract' between the Hospice and its volunteers is very healthy
- ▶ The organisation has good role deployment, shared values and good level's of communication.

Further developments

- ▶ Volunteer inductions adapted to meet the training needs of individuals (eg, boundaries of care, consideration of first aid training for drivers)
- ▶ Development of individual 'Psychological Contracts' between the hospice and volunteers.

P206

THOSE WHO CAN, DO. THOSE WHO CAN DO MORE, VOLUNTEER.

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Motivations, Challenges and Rewards

Introduction Hospice volunteers have been credited with bringing a unique human dimension to an otherwise clinical setting and are considered to be core members of interdisciplinary palliative care teams.

This study looks at volunteers who have a mainly patient contact role within the Hospice.