

End of Life Care II

OP 031 ENHANCING VITALITY AT END OF LIFE

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Background One of the key elements of the palliative care philosophy is to enhance patients' vitality at end of life. This can be challenging to achieve given the progressive nature of disease and weakness of the body. Collaboration between a documentary film artist, patients, their families and staff, in a Scottish hospice addressed this challenge.

Method Adopting a participatory art based research method; the documentary film-maker worked with over 40 patients, family members and staff in the hospice to identify and expand on the reality and the life within a hospice. Following the patients' lead, further research into music and performance arts required collaboration with a music director and choreographer.

Results Following an extended period of filming and editing, where the material was scrutinised and distilled into portraits and songs, twenty short films and a character led documentary feature films were developed into patient based narratives to be shared with the wider community.

Making and participating in a film was energising, exciting and added new dimension to patients' life even though physically demanding.

For patients it was also important to leave a legacy and a voice reflecting their strength and individuality as they use music and creativity to mirror their personal identity and the day-to-day life in the hospice.

Conclusion Making a film within a hospice has enabled patients to have a voice as individuals and challenge current perceptions of the dying patients as weak and vulnerable due to their declining body and progressive illness.

Wide distribution of the film through television and cinema will encourage public debate across all medias, challenging assumptions about death, dying and the day-to-day life in a hospice.

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