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MIRRORING FAMILY IDENTITY THROUGH DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING: INNOVATIVE WAYS OF WORKING WITH FAMILIES IN A HOSPICE SETTING

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Background A film artist was resident in a Scottish hospice for a year working with staff, patients and families using and teaching filming and editing skills to produce documentary films.

Method Qualitative interviews explored patients and family members experience of making a documentary film about aspects of their family lives. 15 interviews were completed, and transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data, providing order to the data set and allowing for key themes to emerge and be identified.

Results 12 families made films in collaboration with documentary film artist. These films had various purposes, which were decided in collaboration. Some had the purpose of being 'legacies' others were 'portraits' allowing the patient to see and take stock of own life story; others were simply 'play spaces', where patients could express the parts of themselves that may get submerged in the problem-solving ethos of a clinical setting. Each film mirrored strongly the families' identity.

Patients reported they enjoyed specifically seeing the closeness between the family members and the positive functioning of the family reflected in the film. The legacy aspect of the film is in particular important to patients with young children.

Documentary film goes further than the traditional 'memory box' as it captures the day to day life of the family together reflecting the interaction and relationship the patient has with his/her family as well as mirroring the family identity.

Conclusion Working with a film artist in a hospice has equipped hospice staff with new technical knowledge and a ground-breaking documentary intervention to use with families where one family member is facing the end of life.

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