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END OF LIFE CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG PROBLEMS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Introduction The problematic use of substances is linked to many forms of chronic and life threatening conditions, the majority of which affect people in later life. In part as a consequence of population ageing and with evidence suggesting that older people's substance use is increasing, this complex and heterogeneous group is growing. Thus greater numbers will require palliative care and present new challenges to end of life services. This study explores the nature and extent of these changes and the needs of service users and providers.

Aim(s) and method(s) There are five strands to the study; evidence for practice: an international review via a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA), establishing what is known about prevalence and incidence via a secondary analysis of qualitative and quantitative datasets, exploration of the experiences of people with chronic or terminal illness and a similarly for the experiences of family members and carers, and professionals' perspectives collected via key informant interviews.

Results The study began in May 2016 and we will have preliminary findings for presentation from the REA, the

quantitative dataset analysis, and the secondary analysis of carer/family study data by October 2016.

Conclusion(s) This is a key and under-researched area of palliative and end of life care, and an area which we already know results in considerable challenges for both end of life service providers and also for substance use services. Little is known about what may already be in place and still less about the composition and scale of the relevant populations.

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