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BORED TO DEATH? AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF BOREDOM AMONGST HOSPICE INPATIENTS

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Introduction Boredom impacts upon psychological well-being and quality of life. There is little research into boredom in the physically ill, and none of patients in hospices in the UK.

Aims and Methods To assess whether boredom is a problem in hospice inpatients; to identify factors that suggest which

patients are most at risk of boredom; and to determine whether a single question (“Are you bored?”) identifies boredom as effectively as a detailed questionnaire. A validated scale, the *Purposelessness, Understimulation and Boredom (PUB) Scale*, was used to identify bored patients in 71 patients at three hospice inpatient units. Further questions were asked to look for an association of boredom with performance status, deafness and poor eyesight, ability to pursue long standing interests, and with depression.

Results There was a high prevalence (79%) of boredom in this sample population. There was no clearly identified predictor of susceptibility to boredom, nor correlation with a single question. If boredom is suspected then depression should be excluded as the two are closely linked.

Conclusion Given the psychological impact of boredom, we should investigate whether we can help hospice in-patients to find interesting or fulfilling activities in order to improve their quality of life.