

Discussion Expected and unexpected are words that relate to this project. Expected reductions in anxiety were met. One of the most surprising things (needing further research) is where participants reported improvements in physical awareness and health as a result of meditation practice.

Conclusion Meditation (mindfulness) offers a model of how certain hospice skills are eminently transferable to different settings enhancing the hospices model of care, community engagement and profile.

P43 THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY UK HOSPICES: REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

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Background With more than 65% of adults actively using social media each week it is important to ensure that hospices are developing new ways to engage with this population group to encourage fundraising and provide support to patients and carers. Social media provide exciting opportunities for hospices to widen their influence and activity, but also raise practical and ethical issues which must be addressed.

Methods This research appraised 150 hospice websites in England and Wales to determine the prevalence of social media and how it is being used to engage, educate and support hospice users, volunteers and staff. Numbers of users and type of use (fundraising, support, awareness raising) were recorded and factors such as prominence on website explored. Social media sites were also searched for links to hospice and palliative care issues.

Results In total, 35% of hospice websites used Facebook and 33% used Twitter to communicate with the public, 28% of websites accessed did not use any form of social media. The majority of social media sites were used to encourage and provide information regarding fundraising. Very few websites used a forum, an opportunity for hospices to provide support to hospice users whilst also educating and encouraging fundraising in a more secure environment. The extended search of social media sites highlighted areas of discussion, support and awareness raising distinct from and not tapped into by hospice sites.

Discussion The rewards and disadvantages of forum use for hospices are explored alongside recommendations for improving public awareness of the hospice social media sites. To date, UK hospices are underusing social media both in volume of traffic and scope (overwhelmingly for fundraising only). This leaves hospices self-excluding from much of the potential of social media to inform, support and debate, and at risk of being left behind.

Education, training and research

P44 THE INTRODUCTION OF A PATIENT EDUCATION PROGRAMME INTO A HOSPICE DAY SERVICE

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At a time when hospice care is being scrutinised by commissioners this small study evaluates the implementation of an education programme in a Day Hospice and the impact this had on patients living with life limiting illness.

Education for patients near end of life appears to have received minimal research attention. Wider investigation of the needs of these patients reveals that the impact of illness robs them of their sense of self and autonomy (Johnston 2004), and opportunities to self-care and self-manage can be limited by paternalism (Cottrell 2008, Jackson 2006).

This programme offered patients the opportunity to attend facilitated educational discussion groups such as medicine management, coping with anxiety and breathlessness, and planning ahead for death and to participate in group relaxation and exercise sessions

A case study methodology allowed the use of mixed methods to collect data from three sources; patients, using diaries and transcribed interviews; staff delivering the programme using a focus group; and professionals referring to the service using a questionnaire.

Findings revealed that patients had motivation and capacity to participate and learn however ill they were, demonstrating their desire to be acknowledged as 'active and participating citizens' (Kendall *et al* 2007:524). Patients also experienced an increase in self-esteem and confidence resulting from the programme.

Staff delivering the programme reported an increase in their confidence through facilitating discussion groups and were challenged in relation to their preconceived ideas about what individual patients may want to learn.

Other findings related to the ability to promote the service to a wider group of potential patients.

This small study demonstrates the potential for increased 'self-care' when an education programme is introduced within a Day Hospice setting. This may positively influence potential commissioners to the service and raise the profile of Day Services as part of Hospice Care.

P45 COMMUNICATING WITH CARE, IN AN EVER INCREASINGLY COMPLEX WORLD

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Background Within the last decade, numerous white papers have been published to improve care for palliative care patients. The principle of effective communication is at the heart of clinical practice and professional codes. Often communication training programmes are expensive, elitist or inaccessible. It is a challenge to develop a workforce in the current climate and demands of biological and sociological developments.

The more complex healthcare becomes, the more important it becomes to keep it simple.

Aim To improve the confidence and competence of the workforce who will communicate with palliative care patients.

Approach Design & delivery of innovative, accessible, multi-professional education. The two day programme includes pre and post training interviews in order to provide meaningful, individual assessment and feedback. The teaching styles are both negotiated and didactic. The programme provides an opportunity for professionals to observe and participate in scenarios which demonstrate key and difficult issues involved in communication. The teaching team consists of 'Jobbing experts' who have undergone advanced communication skills training, specialist clinicians who share the many and various scripts that lie in their memories. Formative assessments include a reflective essay,