MOVE IT OR LOSE IT! DEVELOPING SUPPORTIVE CARE: THE EVALUATION OF AN EXERCISE PROGRAMME FOR PATIENTS WITH MS

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Studies have suggested that engagement in a programme of exercise is beneficial for people living with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). There is evidence of improvements in mobility, overall health and the management of some symptoms such as fatigue, muscle stiffness, anxiety and depression.

St Giles Hospice has been working to develop its provision of Supportive Care, working with community partners to meet the needs of those affected by a life limiting illness who have previously not easily accessed hospice services.

A 12 week pilot exercise and support programme was undertaken in collaboration with a community based exercise facilitator, and local NHS MS services.

The aims:

- promote and maintain independence
- improve muscle strength, flexibility, mobility and activity
- provide a supportive environment
- introduce patients to hospice support

The exercise class was set to music, using a range of equipment, most participants began from a seated position, with encouragement to stand if appropriate, there was focus on improving strength, stamina, mobility, co-ordination, balance, flexibility and confidence

The outcomes:

- 9 people attended, aged between 43 and 77
- Overall attendance = 75%, 83 out of 111 possible attendances
- Evaluation: participants recorded sit to stand from their chair as a measure of leg strength at the beginning and end of the course.
- The results showed significant improvement in all participants demonstrating a tangible increase in leg strength and technique. Being able to quantify their own progress boosted self-esteem. Participants reported significant social and supportive benefits to attending.

The hospice has engaged in dialogue with commissioners to support this work. We have engaged with other MS patients, their carers and NHS staff to promote the benefits of the programme. We have engaged in dialogue with the patients who have attended and work with them to provide a maintenance programme.

ENGAGING MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES: AN EVALUATION OF A MARIE CURIE HOSPICE PROJECT AIMING TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES

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Background There is increasing emphasis on ensuring that access to healthcare is equitable in the UK, yet on-going evidence demonstrates that minority ethnic communities are underrepresented in accessing palliative care. A Marie Curie Hospice in Wales initiated a funded outreach project with a keyworker post to engage minority ethnic communities, aiming to improve access to palliative care services.

Methods The study aim is to evaluate the outreach project and keyworker post. A longitudinal evaluation of the initiative is being undertaken, encompassing interviews with hospice and community healthcare professionals, minority ethnic communities and the project keyworker. Key project documents, such as reports, and hospice ethnicity data are also being analysed. This presentation reports on data from semi-structured interviews with hospice staff and keyworker, and analysis of project reports. Relevant ethical and governance approvals were obtained.