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WHO RESPONDS TO A BEREAVED FAMILY SURVEY ABOUT ACUTE HOSPITAL CARE AT THE END OF LIFE?

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Aim To explore who responded to the Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust (LTHT) bereaved family survey.

Background The LTHT Specialist Palliative Care Team (SPCT) locally adapted a bereavement survey for families (Worcestershire Acute Hospital NHS Trust, 2012). This was developed to give bereaved relatives the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience of the care their relative received at the end of life in the acute setting. The LTHT SPCT Bereaved Carers Service User (BCSU) group contributed to the design of the survey at the outset.

Method Over a 10 week period, March to May 2013, the survey was given to bereaved relatives of adult patients when they collected medical cause of death certificates from the bereavement office. Patients who died in A&E were excluded.

Results There were 146 respondents (response rate 23%). Trends identified from the demographics were that respondents tended to be from children of the deceased (son 23%, daughter 40%) and most responses came from older peoples' services (27%). The most prevalent age of death was 86–90. There was a low response rate from oncology wards (1%). Results were presented to the BCSU group.

Conclusion The highest response was from daughters of older adults. Further exploration is needed into the low response rate from oncology, and spouses of the deceased. The timing of the survey may have influenced the group of respondents. It may have been too early on in their bereavement. Delaying the time that the survey is sent to bereaved relatives/carers may help increase the response rate. Opinions from the BCSU group and experience from other hospital trusts will be considered to inform changes to the next survey to gain feedback from a more representative population and improve the care patients receive at the end of life.