3. Increase staff understanding of discharge processes
4. Produce patient information leaflet.

Method A senior staff nurse led the work stream and undertook a retrospective base line audit of patient discharges and a staff survey to explore their experience of discharging patients from the in-patient unit (IPU). Using these results a patient leaflet has been produced, clearly outlining hospice expectations, discharge details and funding streams. A part-time discharge educator, with extensive experience of continuing health care, has been employed to review discharge processes and provide staff education. Education has been delivered one-to-one in relation to patient discharges in real time and within a formal setting.

Results Audit results have shown that the uncertainty of end of life care, family concerns and timely access to nursing home placements and care packages are significant factors when planning discharge from the IPU. It was also identified that clinical pressures affected timely completion of discharge documentation.

Achievements at six months:
- Increased patient discharges
- Reduction in average length of stay to 14 days
- All qualified staff have received training and awareness training for nursing assistants planned
- Patient leaflet completed.

Conclusion Patient flow and staff confidence have increased significantly following commencement of the project and the discharge educator post has been extended for an additional six months.

Using acupuncture to treat hot flashes and night sweating for patients with breast cancer
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10.1136/bmjspcare-2017-hospice.188

Background Hot flashes and night sweating are a common disruptive clinical problem that affects nearly two-thirds of all breast cancer survivors. Adjuvant hormonal therapies are an essential part of the treatment regimen for early breast cancer, and are used to prevent recurrence. However, hot flashes and night sweating are the most frequently occurring side effects of these interventions.

Aim To assess the effectiveness of acupuncture in breast cancer related hot flashes and sweating.

Method A 44 year-old woman with a diagnosis of breast cancer had been suffering from intractable hot flashes and night sweating for the past two years. She had tried all other measures but these had very little or no effects on her symptoms. The subject received acupuncture treatment once a week for eight weeks, and the needles were stimulated manually every 10 min during each session. In all the treatment sessions, acupuncture points were stimulated manually and the needles were left in situ for 30 mins. Subjective measurement of vasomotor symptoms used Visual Analogue Scale (VAS).

Results A noticeable reduction in hot flashes and night sweating were observed after six sessions of treatment, which had a huge impact on her sleep pattern and psychological wellbeing. By the end of eight weeks of treatment the subject reported a significant reduction in both her vasomotor and associated symptoms such as palpitations, anxiety, irritability and headaches.

Conclusion It would appear that eight sessions of acupuncture treatment had been shown to be effective in reducing vasomotor symptoms, especially for breast cancer patients who are seeking nonpharmacological therapies.