Action Research Project for the Integration of Palliative Care into Heart Failure Management

Update as of June 2011
McDevitt, R. 1,2,3,4, Bates, M. 4, Buckley, U. 1 Lucey, M. 3, Lynch, M. 5, Mahon, N. 1, O’ Neill, J. 2,1, Ryan, K. 1,4, Sheridan, N. 1, Kavanagh, E. 1 & Tracey, C. 1

Department of Cardiology, Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, Dublin 1,
Department of Cardiology, Connolly Hospital 2,
St. Francis Hospice, Raheny 3,
Family GP Practice, North Dublin 4
Irish Hospice Foundation 5
Setting

- Mater Misericordiae University Hospital,
- Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown,
- St. Francis Hospice, Raheny and
- GP Family Practice in Fairview, North Dublin.
Background and Context

• Within the Irish setting and particular with in the acute sector, there is compelling evidence that patients suffering from chronic illness other than cancer do not always receive a palliative care approach or specialist palliative care (Fitzsimons et al, 2007, O’Leary and Tiernan, 2008).

• In August 2008 The European Society of Cardiology recommended a collaborative approach from GPs, Specialist Heart Failure Services and Specialist Palliative Care Services. The steering committee of this project reflects this recommendation.

• “The principles of palliative care must be embedded into disease management frameworks.” Palliative Care for All Report (2008)
Action Research

- Action research is a systematic form of inquiry that is collective, collaborative, self-reflective, critical, and undertaken by the participants of the inquiry (McCutcheon, G. & Jung, B. 1990).
- It is unique in bridging the theory/practice gap affecting positive change within health settings.
- Data gathered will also be shared with a wider audience.
Action Research Cycle
Problem Identification

1. Literature Review
2. End of Life Review
3. Questionnaire
4. Ethical Approval
5. Focus Groups
Educational Needs of Cardiology Staff Identified

• 97% have no qualification in palliative care
• 98% had attended no palliative care training in the last two years
• 94% interested in attending palliative care education for heart failure patients
• 69% did not know the principles of palliative care
What is Palliative Care?

- Demystifying Palliative Care
- Website for Education Modules
- Education sessions
- Booklets
- Poster and Leaflet
Communication

• 96% indicate talking to patients is important
• 49% find it stressful talking to a patient who is dying
• 55% would like enhanced communication skills to facilitate difficult conversations with patients
• 32% would like to improve their communications skills with relatives
Communication Action

- Data Collection
- Feedback to Steering Committee
- Feedback to Participants
- Prepare Plan of Action
- Final Journeys Programme
- Evaluate Action

Flow: Data Collection → Feedback to Steering Committee → Feedback to Participants → Prepare Plan of Action → Final Journeys Programme → Evaluate Action → Data Collection
Action Initiative

Heart Failure Staff to visit Hospice

Hospice Staff to visit Cardiac Units

Community Palliative Care to visit Cardiac Units

Joint Education sessions

Heart failure patients to be able to access hospice care
• Action research is not about learning *why* we do certain things, but rather *how* we can do things better.

• It is about how we can change our practice to improve patient care.
The Irish Hospice Foundation & Health Services Executive (2008) Palliative Care for All: Integrating Palliative Care into Disease Management Frameworks. Dublin: IHF & HSE.


This research project is jointly funded by the Irish Hospice Foundation, the Irish Heart Foundation and the Baxter International Foundation and is supported by the HSE. Two further action research projects are examining the framework for palliative interventions in the care pathway of people with advanced respiratory disease and those with dementia.

See development page on [www.hospice-foundation.ie](http://www.hospice-foundation.ie)
Contact points for further information:
For Advanced Heart Failure Disease Action Research Project contact: Rosemary McDevitt, Research Project Officer, Tel. +353 1 8545236/0871773760
rmcdevitt@mater.ie
ctracey@mater.ie or edelk@mater.ie
For further details of the Palliative Care for All Programme see Development Page on
www.hospice-foundation.ie