

Don't forget about me

Developing a person-centred approach to caring for people with dementia within a hospice setting

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Background

Dementia currently affects around 88,000 people in Scotland¹. With an ageing population and improvement in diagnosis this figure is set to double by 2031¹.

The National Dementia Strategy² sets the requirement for all health and social care organisations to improve dementia care. As palliative care strives to care for all, regardless of diagnosis, culture or background it is essential that hospices are able to care for those living with & dying from dementia^{1,3}.

St Columba's Hospice embraces the challenge of providing a safe engaging environment for individuals with dementia requiring specialist palliative care.

Practice Development

A multi-disciplinary working group was formed to develop a person-centred care plan for patients with dementia and/or other cognitive impairment. A workshop facilitated by a dementia specialist was attended by all group members and a critical review of the literature undertaken^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9}.

A person-centred care plan was developed which guides clinical staff to consider effective communication with the person and family; the impact of the environment on the person; the importance of meaningful activities; tools to support physical care and symptom management and when to seek guidance from external professionals. The care plan is designed to work flexibly so some or all of the elements can be used.



Supporting practice and future developments

The implementation of the care plan has been supported by dementia awareness sessions for all clinical staff and a full day workshop for those with a further interest. Support to use the care plan in practice is provided by key members of the working group. An initial informal review has taken place and adaptations made. A formal evaluation is planned to guide future developments and to ensure sustainability of this essential work.

*adapted from the Alzheimer's Society 'This is Me' tool⁵

References

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