

Introducing

Anna Lloyd
Research Fellow



I have been the research fellow at St Columba's Hospice for the past three years. My work involves facilitating palliative care research and building St Columba's as a research active hospice. This means promoting research awareness and involvement across the hospice at all levels. I help facilitate research carried out by Universities and in partnership with other palliative care centres. I am also involved with carrying out research, primarily using qualitative methods. I believe that building our research capacity will improve the care of patients as well as the confidence of our staff as well as contributing to the evidence base for clinical and supportive care.

I work alongside our Director of Education and Research, Dr Erna Haraldsdottir and our Medical colleagues Dr Duncan Brown, Dr Barry Laird, Medical Research Fellow Dr Charlie Hall, our Research Nurse, Jane Cook and Research Dietician, Honor Blackwood.

My background is varied having trained and worked as a nurse before gaining a BSc and MSc in Psychology. I was then fortunate to be able to bring these fields together through a PhD with the Primary Palliative Care Research Group at Edinburgh University.

Edition 3 of our Newsletter

Welcome to our third research newsletter. Here we will report on how we are continuing to build a research active hospice. We highlight our achievements and goals and offer overviews of the staff members that make up our research team.

Current projects

Our research team continues to grow and we have been working over 8 active research projects of which four are highlighted below.

Dietician project

Nutrition plays a vital role in patient care and can improve quality of life for patients. However, we know that for patients with incurable cancer, nutritional intake is often inhibited which can lead to malnutrition and reduced quality of life. Understanding and meeting the nutritional and hydration needs of patients and carers, in line with their wishes is therefore a key aspect of palliative care. St Columba's Hospice is exploring the role of a dietitian within a hospice setting and through the EATiNg Study which aims to improve nutritional care to make this more person centred. Following observations of practice within the inpatient unit and semi structured interviews with clinical staff we have identified key areas that we hope to develop and changes we would like to implement with staff in order to improve the nutritional care that St Columba's provides.

VR project

We are pleased to be working with Billy Agnew at Viarama in bringing virtual reality (VR) technology to the hospice. Early this year we began our preliminary study investigating how VR is received by hospice patients. 20 patients took part in a guided immersive virtual reality experience guided by Billy from Viarama.

Many patients were able to virtually visit places of interest of meaning for them. Reactions were of joy, happiness and amazement or a feeling of being peaceful and calm with some voicing that they were able to forget symptoms. Participants valued being able to visit somewhere that they now never would while others were able to visit places, often from younger days, that they wished to see again expressing that it allowed recourse to a happy time of life. Some patients had very profound positive reactions including Rita who was able to visit Paris, a place she had long hoped to see. Her experience was movingly captured and subsequently broadcast by BBC Scotland.



ENERGY project

The Energy study has been ongoing since 2018 and we are pleased to report that the team have recruited 46 patients who have taken part in this exercise and nutritional intervention. Of these participants, 15 have also taken part in an embedded qualitative interview study about their views and experiences of taking part. The data will now be pulled together and we will be able to report on the effectiveness of this intervention for people with advanced cancer across a range of measures that are not only physical but include quality of life measures also. It is hoped that the findings from the qualitative interview study will highlight what aspects of the intervention people found more or less helpful and will guide us in refining the intervention further.

Prospective study

This exciting study is a collaboration between St Columba's Hospice and the Marie Curie Hospice in Edinburgh. We aim to find out who is admitted to the hospices in Edinburgh and why they are admitted as well as finding out, from the perspective of the patient, their family members and the hospice staff if this was the best place for them to be. We hope to be able to give an overview of how our services are utilised and provide recommendations for tailoring our services in future so that people of Edinburgh and Lothians will get the most appropriate care.

Publication Highlights

Over the past year we have had 28 articles published in academic journals and 17 oral and poster presentations at conferences both nationally and internationally. Here we draw attention to our publication in the International Journal of Palliative Nursing. This paper presents findings from a PhD study where an intervention was developed to support Goal Setting in Palliative Care in a hospice setting. Based on observations in practice, interviews and case note analysis the paper highlights current practice in relation to goal setting in palliative care and identifies how this can be improved to be more person centred. In collaboration with Sally Boa, the research lead on this project, we aim to expand this work with a multi-site study over a number of UK hospices to implement a Goal Setting Framework into hospice care.

Boa, S., Duncan, E., Haraldsdottir, E. and Wyke, S. (2018). Patient-centred goal setting in a hospice: a comparative case study of how health practitioners understand and use goal setting in practice. *International Journal of Palliative Nursing*, 24(3), pp.115-122