



Article of the Month

August 2017

Determinants of hospital death in haematological cancers: findings from a qualitative study

Dorothy McCaughan, Eve Roman, Alexandra G Smith, Anne Garry, Miriam Johnson, Russell Patmore, Martin Howard and Debra A Howell

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A useful study examining why haematological patients die in hospital. While it reinforces the complex and uncertain trajectory of some of these conditions there is a distinction drawn between younger and older patients. There is also a patient expectation to be able to access hospital and on-going supportive treatment which community and hospice settings cannot match. The final theme is that it is not always practical to manage a death at home if complicated. It is probably worth sharing with your local haematologist as includes bereaved relatives' views.

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Effect of communication skills training on outcomes in critically ill patients with life-limiting illness referred for intensive care management: a before-and-after study

Neil r Orford, Sharyn Milnes, Nicholas Simpson, Gerry Keely, Tania Elderkin, Allison Bone, Peter martin, Rinaldo Belomo, Michael Bailey and Charlie Corke

A brave attempt to do a communication skills intervention on the effects of ITU admissions. The study was in Australia but could equally apply to the UK. However, the focus was on goals of care and the intervention with simulated patients around this. It is then not surprising the documentation related to this increased but overall admission rate and outcomes did not. The study focused on those admitted to the ICU and you are left wondering if the focus should be on preventing these admissions in the first instance. As a recent conference slide said, "one hour of difficult conversation can prevent two weeks of ITU admission and death". There is increasing evidence of who is likely to benefit from admission and who won't – the paper talks about disease specific trajectories to focus on.

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The costs, resource use and cost-effectiveness of Clinical Nurse Specialist-led interventions for patients with palliative care needs: A systematic review of international evidence

Natalia Salamanca-Balen, Jane Seymour, Glenys Caswell

Patients with palliative care needs do not access specialist palliative care services according to their needs. Clinical Nurse Specialists working across a variety of fields are playing an increasingly important role in the care of such patients, but there is limited knowledge of the extent to which their interventions are cost-effective.

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