



Beyond the Bedside: Empowering Medical Champions to Enhance Palliative Care

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Background

'Palliative and End of Life Care is everyone's business'

ABUHB Specialist Palliative Care (SPC) Team provides a consult service and education for staff, supporting complex needs of palliative and end of life patients across all adult specialties. The SPC Directorate are a small team covering a large geographical area, with deficits in workforce and national recruitment issues.

Increased trajectory Approx. 6,000 people per year die in Gwent with a predicted increase of 10% by 2039 (ABUHB IMTP 2022-2025).

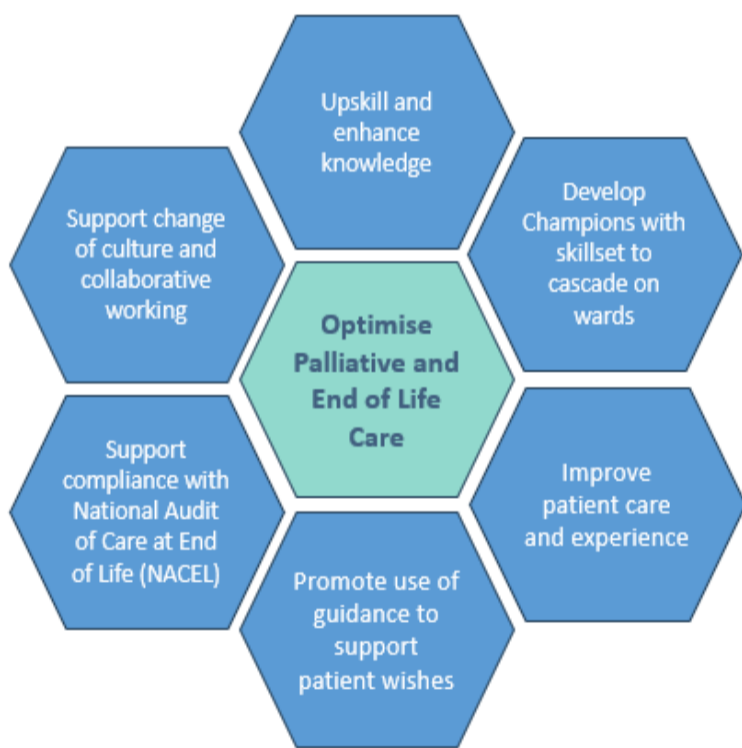
Hospital deaths 52% of deaths occur within ABUHB hospitals (Last Year of Life Population Dashboard).

Generalist Team Demand Approx. 67% of dying patients are not known to Specialist Palliative Care (SPC Mortality Audit 2024).

An innovative solution to drive change was developing a Palliative Care Medical Champions Programme to empower and upskill the medical workforce.

Aims/Objectives

Key Aim: To improve the provision of timely and quality palliative and end of life care in acute settings, by developing a robust training programme.



Project Approach

A two-day interactive training programme was developed for medical staff. A scoping exercise identified enthusiasm for learning and training needs. Topics included symptom management, communication, care in the last days of life, advance care planning, irreversibly deteriorating patient and opioid management. This was promoted via stakeholder engagement, social media and video/poster. Pre and post evaluations were undertaken to assess impact and change of practice of participants.

A collaborative Working Group was key to ensure delivery of the programme.



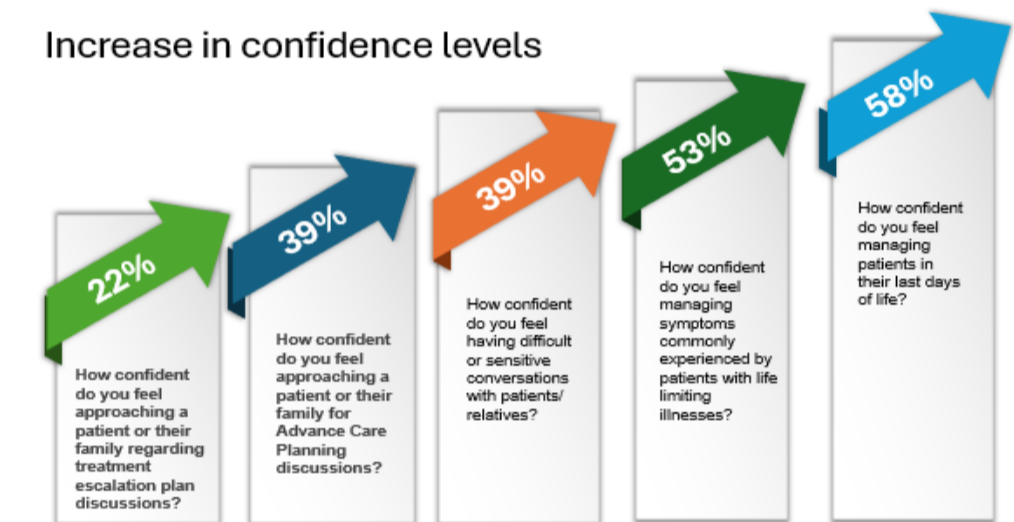
Project Outcomes

Thirty-three medical staff across various specialties and disciplines attended the programme, including Consultants, Specialty Doctors, Junior Doctors and Physician Associates.

Of the participants who provided feedback:

- **100%** felt that their knowledge and skills have improved.
- **100%** felt the changed practice had a positive impact for patient/family/carers.
- **100%** would recommend the programme to their peers.

Increase in confidence levels



Feedback

"Pain management of my patients got significantly better, especially prescribing regular morphine, and converting doses became easier"

"Since attending the course I have completed my first Care Decisions Guidance"

"When asked by Consultants to refer to Palliative Care, I am more likely to question whether this is currently indicated, or if we can manage the patient/symptoms ourselves or through the use of other services"

"Discussing ACP with family and initiating such conversations has improved"

"Confident while dealing with opioid dose changing from one form to the other and managing toxicity"

"I have referred two patients to the chaplaincy service for pastoral support - both had very positive feedback"

Key Conclusions

The development of the training programme has had a positive impact for the medical workforce and increased confidence and competence to enable timely prudent palliative and end of life care on wards.

There continues to be enthusiasm and motivation from medical professionals to increase their skillset for future cohorts.

Next Steps

- Develop a rolling medical champion programme and ongoing support
- Ongoing monitoring of impact
- Adopt and spread
- CPD Accreditation

"A HUGE POSITIVE CHANGE" programme participant