

## Marie Curie Cancer Care Research Programme - Project Grant

Project details
<p><b>Professor Sheila Payne (PI)</b>, Lancaster University</p> <p><b>Unpacking the home: family carers reflections on dying at home</b></p> <p>Duration of project: 24 months Start date: 1 June 2011 Budget: £134,891</p>

Abstract
<p><b>Background</b> Current policy prioritises patient choice over place of care and promotes dying at home. It assumes that there are family carers available to provide care. The study combines expertise from social gerontology, medical geography, medical sociology and end of life care to investigate the ways that 'dying at home' are constructed from the accounts of family carers.</p> <p><b>Aims and Objectives</b> This proposal will address the first call by explicitly recognising that family carers are central to the experience of dying at home for older people, and they have needs that may be amenable to support and anticipatory planning. It will examine the way the home becomes transformed in the process of providing end of life care. It will offer a critical analysis of policies that aim to increase home deaths and how they impact on family carers during the process of care and in the early period of bereavement.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To elicit the accounts of family carers about witnessing the dying in their home of an older person</li> <li>2. To elicit views about the practical and other types of support that made this possible and their sources</li> <li>3. To elicit views of deficits or gaps in support</li> <li>4. To identify how the social and emotional 'space' of home is transformed during the process of care-giving</li> <li>5. To elicit perceptions of how the dying process and the memories of that process have impacted upon the use and feelings about 'home' during the first 6 months of bereavement</li> <li>6. To critically evaluate these carers' accounts to identify the practical benefits and drawbacks of current policy, especially for older people.</li> </ol> <p><b>Methods</b> A 24 month qualitative study will use narrative interviews with 50 family carers in the North West and South West of England, recruited using maximum variety sampling. This study will elicit the accounts of family carers witnessing the dying at home of an older person and explore transformations of the 'home'.</p> <p><b>How the results of this research will be used</b> The proposed research will contribute to the improvement of end of life care by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifying practical strategies to support family carers at home, to ensure the sensitivity of services to the needs of older people and their carers;</li> <li>• considering the extent to which currently policy initiatives that emphasise dying at home and offering patient choice, result in practical benefits to carers or disadvantage them.</li> </ul>