

Dimbleby Marie Curie Cancer Care Research Fund - Project Grant

Project details

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Family carers' perceptions of their educational needs when providing end-of-life care : a systematic review of qualitative research

Duration of project: 18 months

Start date: September 2012 (TBC)

Budget: £34,000 (TBC)

Abstract

Family carers play a significant and important role in ensuring that people with cancer and other life threatening diseases can be cared for in their own home. Carers often need to develop new skills such as: how to provide physical care, how to manage symptoms such as pain or breathlessness, in addition to maintaining a balance between their own needs and those of the person they are caring for in order to remain well. Carers also need to cope with the idea that their caring role will end with the death of the person they look after. Several different ways of helping carers with their caring role have been devised. These have been shown to enhance their ability to continue their role and reduce their distress. No one has drawn this literature together to understand what it says about developing education interventions, which family carers would find helpful and supportive. A particular type of research called qualitative research – which is concerned with how to make sense of what is happening to them - can help in understanding what carers find important. Bringing research together systematically helps to develop a more complete picture than looking at individual studies. This piece of research will draw together the qualitative research exploring carers' views about how they are taught to care for people with cancer and other life threatening diseases. Doing this will help develop a more full and extensive understanding of these views, enabling improvements to be made in the way education for carers is planned and taught in the future. This in turn, will ensure the most appropriate care is available for the patient who is ill, in addition to ensuring policy and practice can best support the needs of all members of the family involved in end of life care.