



## Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

*...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland*



# The role of the hospice volunteer in community settings

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# Seminar overview

- National, regional and strategic contexts
- Findings from a literature review –
  - Benefits to hospice
  - Benefits to service users and carers
  - Benefits to volunteers
- Conclusions and next steps

# National context

## Policy direction in five nations:

- Service user preference regarding location of end of life care provision
- 74% of people would prefer to die at home yet 54% die in hospital (NICE, 2011)
- Voluntary sector key in making aspirations a reality

# Regional context

- *Living Matters, Dying Matters:*  
‘families, carers and volunteers...the crucial cornerstone of this care’ (p.4)  
‘enabling all organisations to work collaboratively to design, deliver and improve palliative and end of life care services’ (p.38)
- *Transforming Your Care:*  
‘Services will regard home as the hub’ (p.7)

# The contribution of volunteers

- Hospice enabled death needed in a range of settings
- Wide variety of hospice volunteer roles essential to effective service delivery
- Increased volunteer support = increased scope and size of provision
- Collaboration between hospice at home staff, volunteers and other community staff

# Strategic direction

- ‘New models of health’ emphasize community response reliant on volunteer involvement
- Low numbers of volunteers providing direct care (NICE, 2011)
- Need for strategic approach to volunteer development and deployment (HtH, 2012)

# Commissioned literature review

- Ascertain nature of volunteer activities
- Define the scope of volunteer roles
- Identify process regarding selection, induction and training of volunteers
- Outline the benefits of volunteering to the hospice, services users and carers, and volunteers themselves

# Benefits to hospice

- Range of volunteer activity
- Driven by desire to improve quality
- Add diversity to professional team
- Bridge between hospice and community
- Recruitment, selection, induction, education and ongoing support
- Volunteer Value



# Benefits to service users/carers

- Support across illness trajectory
- Increased patient/carer satisfaction
- Complementary to professional care
- Different types of support
- Improve quality and access



# Conclusion (1)

- Volunteering benefits care providers, service users, carers and volunteers themselves
- But evidence unevenly spread
- Volunteering needs development to support palliative and end of life care in the community
- There are some gaps in current research

# Benefits to volunteers

- Health and social benefits
- Volunteer satisfaction
- Education and training
- Motivations for volunteering
- Enduring appeal
- Challenges of volunteering

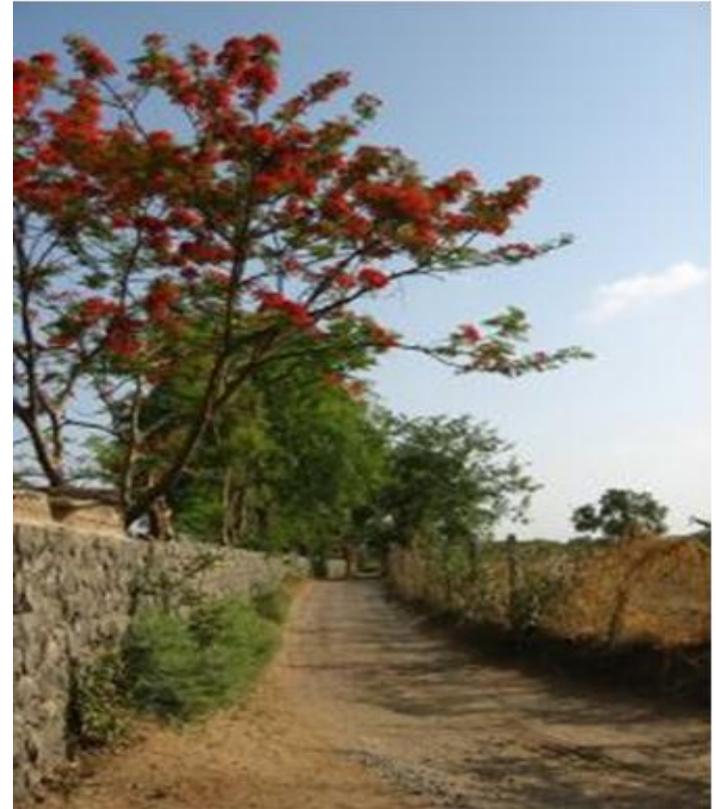


# Conclusion (2)

- Research questions:
  - What training and support is needed?
  - How to involve volunteers in patient care?
  - What exactly can volunteers do?
  - How to avoid tension with paid staff?
  - How to provide culturally sensitive care?
  - What is the impact of volunteering on volunteers?
  - What is the impact of bereavement on volunteering?
  - How to maximize benefits and minimize challenges?

# Conclusion (3)

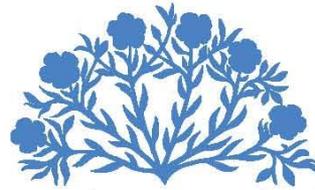
Volunteers occupy 'boundary spaces' and research is needed to better understand how these boundaries are navigated



# Conclusion (4)

- Wider role of All Ireland Institute for Hospice and Palliative Care to promote practice development and explore gaps in knowledge
- Future collaborative research between academia and palliative care providers





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