Abstracts

This study demonstrates that similar barriers to ACD exist internationally. Junior and senior doctors identified particular concerns which could help enhance and target teaching at specific training levels. Findings from nurses suggest that doctors should reflect upon whether sufficient emphasis is given to ACDs and whether priorities should be revised.

REFERENCE

WHAT DELAYS DISCHARGE IN CHILDREN WITH LIFE LIMITING CONDITIONS? A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

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Background It is important that any family of a child with a life limiting condition (LLC) have the option of where they would like their child to receive care (ACT 2010, DOH 2008) and do not have unnecessary protracted periods of hospital admission.

Aims The aim of the project was to establish the perceptions of professionals and parents regarding perceived delay in discharge of children admitted acutely who had a LLC; also to look at ways to expedite discharge if appropriate.

Methods This study took place in a large tertiary teaching hospital. A qualitative approach was taken – one to one interviews with parents and focus groups with professionals. Inclusion criteria included parents of children with life limiting conditions admitted with acute illnesses.

Results The data was analysed using grounded theory. A model emerged of “separateness of expert knowledge” from the parents, community and hospital teams.

Conclusion This study, although limited in terms of participant numbers, explored the perceptions of parents and professionals around discharge in children with LLC admitted with acute conditions. The main finding was the “separateness of expert knowledge” between parents, community teams and hospital teams. All the groups included valued access to a professional who knew the patient well. Hospital staff and community teams felt that co-morbidities resulted in longer lengths of stay.

The reason for admission was not solely due to the acute diagnosis, but also lack of other adequate services for this group of children out of hours. There was no specific treatment identified that prevented discharge.

A multi-professional approach to the care of these children, with a robust system for discharge planning may enhance the service. A multi-professional out of hours telephone service for families of children with LLC may help reduce admissions.

REFERENCES

HANDLE WITH CARE: ADVANCE CARE PLANNING (ACP) IN PAEDIATRIC PATIENTS WITH PALLIATIVE CARE NEEDS: QUALITATIVE STUDY OF EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF PAEDIATRIC INTENSIVE CARE UNIT (PICU) MEDICAL AND NURSING STAFF

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G39 DELIVERING OPTIMUM CARE AT JOURNEY’S END: A COMPARISON OF BARRIERS TO ENDE OF LIFE CARE PLANS BETWEEN A PEDIATRIC ONCOLOGY SPECIALIST CENTRE IN THE USA AND A DISTRICT GENERAL HOSPITAL IN UK

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End of life care is a challenging but vital aspect for children with life-threatening conditions, requiring parental discussion to plan appropriately. Parents express a need for open and honest information, delivered in a sensitive and timely manner. In adults, advanced care discussions (ACD) result in end of life care closer to patient preference, aligning care with patients’ wishes. However there is often patient dissatisfaction regarding the timing and content of ACD.

A recent article in Pediatrics (Durall et al., 2012), identified barriers to conducting ACD for children in a paediatric oncology specialist centre in the USA. Following two challenging cases in our own unit, we assessed our colleagues’ views at a district general hospital (DGH) in the UK, to see if similar barriers were pertinent despite contrasting hospital settings. 27 responses to a 25-item survey, adapted from the above article, were compared with findings from the USA centre. Additionally, we explored differences in perceptions between consultants and junior doctors.

Similarities between the two hospitals were striking, with 5 of the 6 top barriers to ACD at the USA paediatric oncology centre being replicated at the DGH. Key issues in both settings included clinicians not knowing the right time to address issues, and clinician concern about removing hope. Of note, across the two centres, nurses identified lack of clinician time and lack of importance to clinician as barriers whereas doctors did not. For consultant paediatricians, specific barriers to ACD were differences between clinician/parent/patient understanding of prognosis and clinician uncertainty about prognosis. For junior doctors, specific concerns were not knowing the right time to address the issues or what to say.

This study is important to families of a child with a life limiting condition (LLC) have the option of where they would like their child to receive care (ACT 2010, DOH 2008) and do not have unnecessary protracted periods of hospital admission.

Aims The aim of the project was to establish the perceptions of professionals and parents regarding perceived delay in discharge of children admitted acutely who had a LLC; also to look at ways to expedite discharge if appropriate.

Methods This study took place in a large tertiary teaching hospital. A qualitative approach was taken – one to one interviews with parents and focus groups with professionals. Inclusion criteria included parents of children with life limiting conditions admitted with acute illnesses.

Results The data was analysed using grounded theory. A model emerged of “separateness of expert knowledge” from the parents, community and hospital teams.

Conclusion This study, although limited in terms of participant numbers, explored the perceptions of parents and professionals around discharge in children with LLC admitted with acute conditions. The main finding was the “separateness of expert knowledge” between parents, community teams and hospital teams. All the groups included valued access to a professional who knew the patient well. Hospital staff and community teams felt that co-morbidities resulted in longer lengths of stay.

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Background There are increasing numbers of children with palliative care needs in the community. The death of a child is a rare but tragic event. Currently a considerable number of children who do die, do so on PICU. End-of-life care and ACP in paediatric patients presents one of the most complex, emotional and ethically challenging scenarios that exists in clinical medicine. Currently there is a lack of uniformity in approach.

Aim The overall aim of the project was to investigate the research question: “What is current practise related to ACP in relation to children with life-limiting illness on PICU, and how might this be improved?”

Methods Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior medical and nursing staff in a tertiary referral centre PICU. Interviews were transcribed, field notes were documented and a thematic content analysis was carried out, using an inductive approach.

Results The sample comprised eight consultants and six senior nurses. Themes were revealed around “the significance of the death of a child”. ACP is a dynamic, MDT process that is considered essential in order to improve care for children with life-limiting conditions to increase the likelihood of “a good death”. Every case is different, but PICU clinicians feel that ACP can be associated with the delivery of appropriate care that is in the best interests of the patient. Multiple barriers exist, including the difficulty in raising the issue, unpredictable illness trajectories making it difficult to identify when to commence discussions, multicultural issues, and lack of training in and time to deliver ACP.

Conclusion “How people die remains in the memory of those who live on.” Dame Cicely Saunders.

The motivations for improvement of ACP for paediatric patients with palliative care needs are numerous, nationally to standardise care and ensure appropriate use of pressed NHS resources, locally within regions to provide care appropriate for the population and close to home, and most of all on an individual level to ensure the best possible care, with respect for autonomy and choice, for each child with a life-limiting illness and their family.

Clinical Audit on Advanced Care Plan for Management of Cardio-respiratory Arrest in Children and Young Person with Advanced Malignancy (Single Centre Experience)

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Aim To find out whether children with advanced malignant disease referred to Palliative care team had advanced care plan for management of cardiopulmonary arrest or not.

Secondary objectives To detect designated purple form (Advance care plan-ACP) from the West midland paediatric palliative care toolkits have been used or not.

To identify the heath care profession who involved in making ACP decision.

Lastly, to assess place of death related to presence of ACP with DNAR (Do Not Attempt Resuscitation).

Methods Retrospective study of Children with advanced malignant disease who died while under the care of Palliative care team (BCH) during May to October 2011.

Data were collected from Palliative care data base, Patients’ notes (medical and palliative care notes) and Letters.

Standard Child & Young Person’s Advance Care Plan Policy – April 2011

West Midlands Paediatric Palliative Care Network, Paediatric Palliative Care toolkit

Results Total number of death from June 2011 to Oct 2011 was 26, 23 with solid Tumour and 3 with haematology malignancy. Age ranged from neonate till 16 years.

Eighty percent (21/26) of children had formulated plan for death with DNAR. Half (51%) used the purple form (ACP from West midland Paediatric Palliative care toolkit), the remaining half either by using other DNAR forms (20%) or letters (28%).

Most (90%) of the ACP with DNAR were supported by consultant (paediatric oncologist) and only 10% was by general practitioner.

Eighteen children (68%) died at home and all of them had ACP with DNAR. 2 children with ACP with DNAR, died at hospice. 26% (6) died in hospital (oncology ward/PICU), 5 children without ACP and 1 child with ACP in place. All the children (3) with haematological malignancy died in hospital while they were on active treatment without ACP in place.

Conclusion Advanced care plan discussion should start early in the course of illness according to the pace of parents and children at the sensitive manner. The regional standard ACP form (Purple form-Palliative care toolkits) should be used in all cases with life limiting conditions.