

Implementing the Creating Learning Environments for Compassionate Care (CLECC) programme in acute hospital settings: a pilot RCT and feasibility study

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Plain English summary

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Plain English summary

There is public concern about nurses' ability to care compassionately for older people, but there has been very little research about how to improve this situation. We have developed and studied a programme called Creating Learning Environments for Compassionate Care (CLECC). In the CLECC programme, all registered nurses and health-care assistants from participating teams attend a study day, with a focus on team building and understanding patient experiences. Then a senior nurse educator supports the team to try new ways of working on the ward, including regular supportive discussions on improving care. Each ward manager attends learning groups to develop their compassionate care leadership role. Two team members receive additional training in doing observations of care and feeding back to colleagues.

The CLECC programme was piloted on four wards in two English hospitals, with two other wards continuing with business as usual. We interviewed staff and observed CLECC activities to help us understand if it can be easily put into practice and if changes are needed in future. In addition, evaluation methods were tested, including ways to measure compassion, making sure that we could recruit enough older patients in a future study.

It was found that CLECC can be made to work with nursing teams on NHS hospital wards and that staff felt it improved their capacity to be compassionate. It was also learned that we could improve CLECC to help staff carry on using it, by, for example, helping senior nurses to understand their role in supporting staff to use CLECC.

It was found that observations of care were the best way to evaluate care quality for large numbers of older patients with dementia. We also gathered information about the best ways to test CLECC's value for money. These findings have given us a good foundation for designing an effective future evaluation of the CLECC programme.

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