



Research Article

Establishing palliative care research partnerships in Northern Ireland

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Plain language summary

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Why does Northern Ireland need a Palliative Care Research Partnership?

In Northern Ireland, a large number of people need help managing serious long-term illnesses and help at the end of their lives. Compared to the rest of the United Kingdom, research on how to help people in these situations (palliative care research) has been rarely funded in Northern Ireland. The National Institute for Health and Care Research funded a Palliative and End-of-life Research Partnership to support researchers in Northern Ireland so that they could make more applications for the National Institute for Health and Care Research research funding.

What was the Partnership?

The Partnership was led by two researchers in the School of Nursing and Midwifery in Queen's University Belfast. It included patients, relatives of patients, patient organisations, university researchers, Health and Social Care Trusts, charities like Marie Curie and the Hospices, and the Department of Health. A specially trained research assistant was employed to support the Partnership and researchers for 1 year.

What did the Partnership do?

The Partnership met every 2 months. It helped to decide what were the most important things to research. The Partnership spread the news of what it was doing by making a website and sending out a newsletter. It invited researchers to join with the Partners to find good ideas for research. The Partners worked with researchers to help write applications to the National Institute for Health and Care Research for palliative care research funding. The Partnership also ran a conference on partnerships for palliative and end-of-life care research. This was opened by the Minister for Health in Northern Ireland and was well attended by patients and their families, clinical staff and researchers.

With the help of the Partnership, one palliative care research application was submitted to the National Institute for Health and Care Research to test a new way to encourage advance care planning for adults with severe kidney disease.