



Attainments of the first 10 GSF Accredited GP Practices

End of Life Care in Primary Care: The Gold Standards Framework, Going for Gold service improvement programme and Accreditation process

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Primary Care plays a key role in dealing with the increased demands and challenges of our ageing population, including end-of-life care (EOLC). General Practices aim to offer high quality proactive care to patients in the final year of life, enabling more to die where they choose reducing avoidable costly hospitalisation. With increasing pressure on primary care, limitation of resources and rising mortality, new ways of managing EOLC must be found.

The Gold Standards Framework (GSF) Quality Improvement Programme in EOLC has been influential in the UK's development of primary palliative care since 2000. The GSF 'Going for Gold' programme leads to accreditation with the GSF RCGP Quality Hallmark Award.

The impact of the first GSF Accredited Practices is described here. As a result of the programme practices demonstrated earlier identification of patients (14- 51%), more non-cancer conditions on the register (16- 50%), more advance care planning discussions (26- 80%) and more dying in their usual place of residence (52%-61%). Carers' assessments increased (10- 64%) as did formalised bereavement support (33-74%). Other changes include greater coordination across health and social care teams and greater team satisfaction with EOLC, with sustained quality of care evidenced by annual appraisals.

These practices demonstrate what is possible to achieve with the use of a quality enhancement programme, showing that transformation in EOLC provision is achievable. The fact that some can do this means it is possible for others and this may contribute towards developing a national momentum of best practice, enabling more patient-centred cost-effective care for the future ageing population. For effective sustainable change to become mainstreamed there needs to be a supported evidenced-based quality improvement approach, to meet enhanced expectations of regulators and policymakers.

The first 10 practices that undertook GSF Going for Gold training in primary care and progressed to GSF RCGP Accreditation showed significant improvement in key processes in End of Life Care as recognised by NIOCE Guidance and best practice. This trend has been continued three years on following annual appraisal. Summary of key findings from GSF Accredited GP practices includes :

- earlier identification rates of patients in the last year of life, (average 0.54%) (with a range of 30-60%) ie half of all those who died included on the register, which is well above the national average of a quarter of all patients identified
- increased non-cancer patients on their register (18%-47%), increased numbers of care homes residents (22%- 40%)
- efforts to increase the numbers offering and recording advance care planning discussions showed significant increases with an average of 46% (range 26%- 62%) ie about half of all patients on the register offered ACP discussions
- greatly improved systematic carer support offered (17%- 72%)
- more dying in their preferred place of care(44%- 59%), with some halving hospital deaths

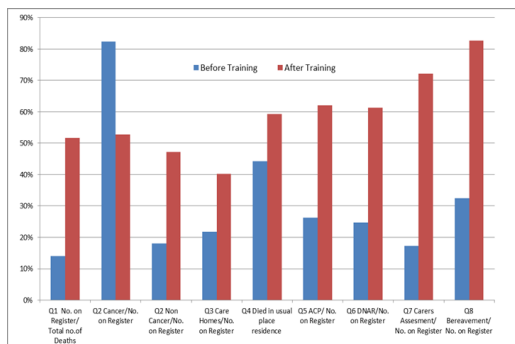


Table 1: Practices 1-10: Pre and post introduction of GSF Gold programme

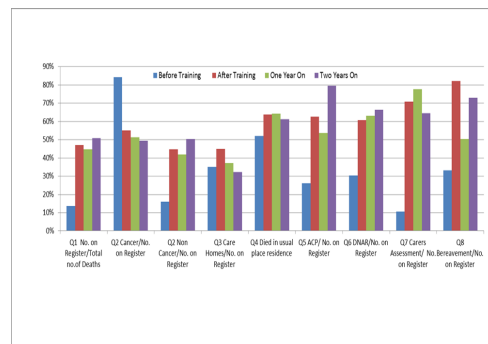


Table 2: Practices 1-7: Two years post introduction of GSF Gold programme

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