Author's response to reviews

Title: Why is recruitment to end-of-life research in primary care still so difficult? A comparison of recruitment of older patients and carers across three English NHS regions.

Authors:

Barbara Hanratty (barbara.hanratty@york.ac.uk)
Elizabeth Lowson (elizabeth.lowson@soton.ac.uk)
Louise Holmes (Louise.holmes@liverpool.ac.uk)
Julia Addington-Hall (jah@soton.ac.uk)
Tony Arthur (tony.arthur@nottingham.ac.uk)
Gunn Grande (Gunn.Grande@manchester.ac.uk)
Jane Seymour (Jane.seymour@nottingham.ac.uk)
Sheila Payne (s.a.payne@lancaster.ac.uk)

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Dear Editor

RE: Why is recruitment to end-of-life research in primary care still so difficult? A comparison of recruitment of older patients and carers across three English NHS regions.

We would be grateful if you could consider this article for publication in BMC Health Services Research. It is concerned with recruitment to end of life studies with older adults in primary care. Research with this population at this point in the life course may have important implications for the delivery of health services. Older adults are the main users of health care, and the last year of life is, for many, a time of intensive use of services.

This study describes recruitment via general practices in three NHS administrative regions of England, using research support networks that worked in different ways. It highlights the difficulty of obtaining representative samples, and illustrates the potential for research governance authorities, health professionals and research networks to take on a gatekeeping role.

The data will be of value to other end of life researchers, but the paper should interest all who conduct, read or use research that recruits participants in primary care.

We hope that this paper will be suitable for your journal and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

Barbara Hanratty and on behalf of
Elizabeth Lowson, Louise Holmes, Tony Arthur, Julia Addington-Hall, Gunn Grande, Sheila Payne and Jane Seymour