Author's response to reviews

Title: Evaluating the systematic implementation of the 'Let Me Decide' advance care planning programme in long term care through focus groups: A user's perspective.

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Version: 2
Date: 13 March 2015

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor

As part of a team of researchers investigating advance care planning and end of life palliative care in nursing homes in Ireland I am submitting a paper titled: Evaluating the systematic implementation of the ‘Let Me Decide’ advance care planning programme in long term care through focus groups: A user’s perspective.

This paper delineates the use of focus groups to explore the impact of implementing a structured advance care planning programme on staff, family, residents and the care environment. A number of studies have explored advance care planning from a quantitative perspective measuring uptake rates, family satisfaction, surrogate decision making, and conversations surrounding advance care planning. This paper reports the hidden benefits and challenges of systematically implementing a programme of advance care planning and palliative care education in nursing homes. We conducted focus groups with 15 senior staff nurses and 2 Directors of Nursing.

We believe this paper will be of interest to your readers both from an advance care planning and palliative care education perspective. It will be of particular relevance to those considering implementing a programme at local level or for policy makers at national level. The richness of the data, which is not often captured in qualitative analysis, may prompt researchers to consider qualitative methods when evaluating programmes.

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare. All authors have contributed to one or all of the following areas; original study design, data collection process, analysis, paper preparation.

All authors have agreed to the submission to the journal and the manuscript is not currently under submission in any other journal.

I look forward to hearing the outcome of this submission.

Kind regards

Nicola

Dr. Nicola Cornally