

## 4 – Working in partnership to improve doctors' preparedness for end of life care

Education and Training Advisory Board  
24 May 2016

# Preparedness: context

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- Around one in ten new UK medical graduates felt poorly prepared for beginning their medical career.
- Postgraduates in their first year of medical training felt well prepared for some aspects of end of life care, such as CPR, but unprepared for others, including what to do if their patient was not improving, changing a consultant's management plan and their own emotional response to the situation.

# Preparedness: a current snapshot

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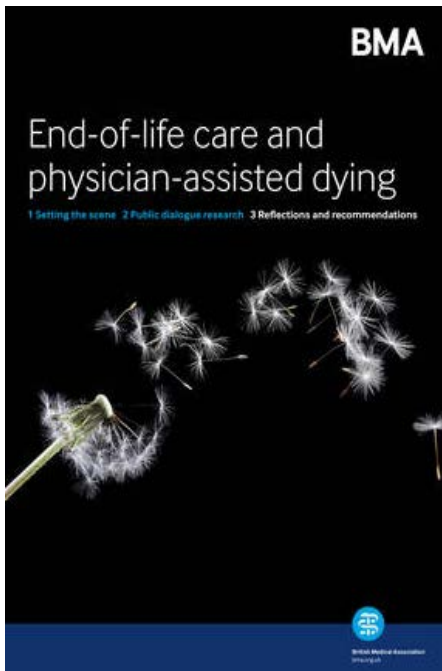
We have launched a short pilot poll to help us understand how prepared medical students feel to care for someone who is dying.

## **Findings to date:**

- Half of respondents feel that their medical education is not preparing them to deliver good end of life care.
- Just under half hadn't received any training or advice on end of life care when they first had contact with a patient receiving end of life care.
- 69% wouldn't feel confident if they met a patient who was likely to die in the next few weeks or months.

# Preparedness: some views from new doctors

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- End of life care only for certain doctors?
- Not all doctors feel confident in providing all aspects of end-of-life care, particularly in areas which don't involve clinical decision making.
- Significant numbers of medical students and doctors in training highlighted a lack of exposure to patients receiving palliative care or dying – they lacked confidence in discussing the end of life and dying with patients.
- There was a perceived lack of confidence in the administration of pain relief and predicting how long a patient has to live. Desire for more training.
- Doctors were also concerned about the continuing support available for them as they cared for dying patients throughout their careers, including for their own wellbeing.

# Preparedness: key BMA recommendations

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“I found it very difficult to talk to patients about dying, prior to working in a hospice, because one, as a junior doctor we’re not taught very much, and two, those kinds of complex conversations we leave to the senior consultants because they have more experience.”

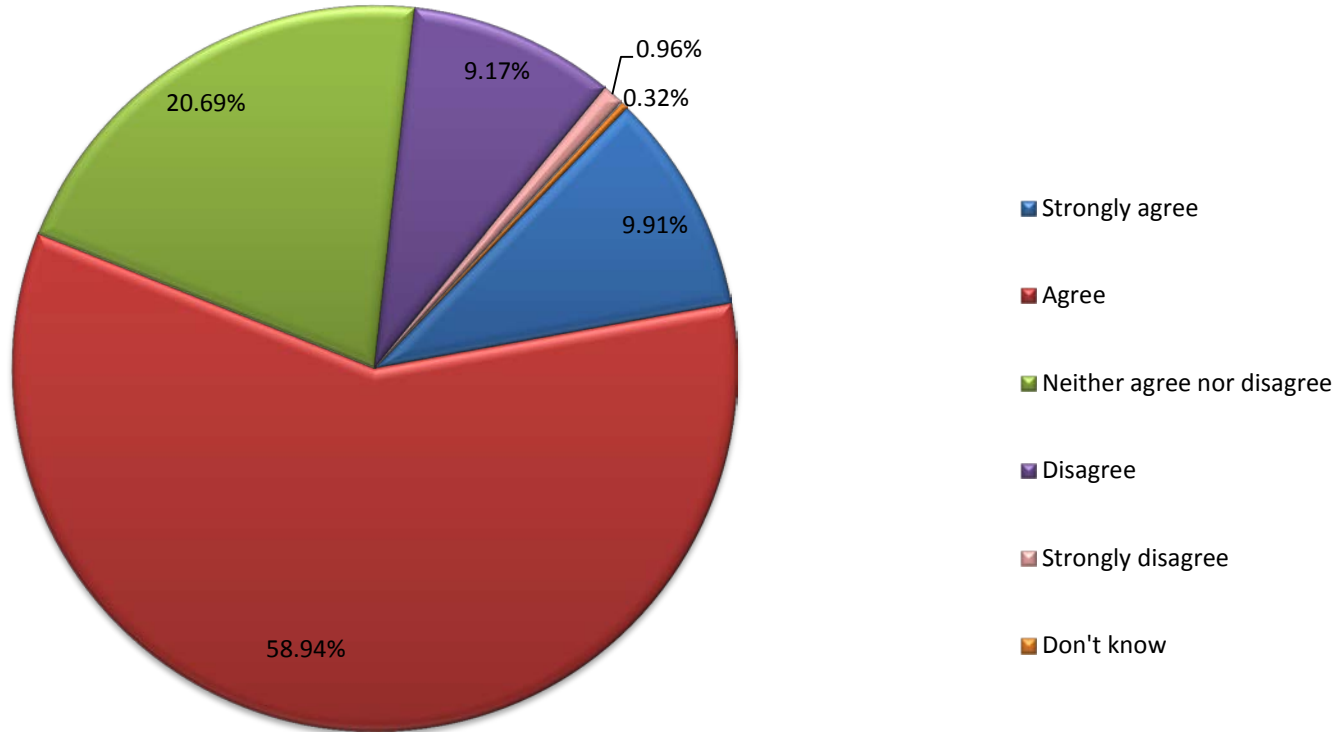
Doctor

- Doctors need more training and support to improve the quality of end-of-life care.
- Education and training in end of life is crucial for the large number of doctors who don’t specialise in end-of-life care, but who will play a significant role in caring for dying patients.
- Education and training is not a one-off event, but should be seen to be part of training at all levels.
- Providing individualised care should be supported by training and support for doctors in communicating with and listening to patients about their wishes and preferences for end-of-life care.
- There is a need for more training to help doctors identify when patients may be approaching the end of their lives, and to equip doctors with the necessary communication skills to have difficult conversations with patients and families.

# Preparedness: an insight into training

How trainee doctors at Foundation Level 1 answered the following question:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "My skills in the early management of acutely ill patients were adequate to prepare me for my first foundation post".



# Preparedness: emotional resilience



**Our work on emotional resilience:** Monrouxe research on [Foundation doctors, transitions and emotions](#) (July 2015)

“Suppressing an emotion... I was upset and I did have to hold that back...there was probably a tear in my eye...it was upsetting and I felt like I was saying goodbye to him then ... if I was to burst into tears it doesn't look very professional. That's one thing to keep up”

*Quote from a Foundation Level 2 doctor when caring for a dying patient*

# Good practice examples from medical schools

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Faculty of Medicine and Health





# Preparedness: our education work

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As a member of the Leadership Alliance for the Care of Dying People, we accepted the following recommendations from its report (published June 2014/updated July 2015).

- *The General Medical Council should review whether adequate education and training is currently provided at undergraduate and postgraduate levels to ensure competence.*
- *It should also consider how, given its recently increased responsibilities for specialist training and enhanced role in continuing professional development, it can ensure that practising doctors maintain and improve their knowledge and skills in these areas.*

# Undergraduate education

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***Outcomes for graduates (Tomorrow's Doctors) requires that students:*** 'Contribute to the care of patients and their families at the end of life, including management of symptoms, practical issues of law and certification, and effective communication and team working.'

## **Evidence about how the outcome is being met:**

- Changes to the way education is delivered in light of the review of the Liverpool Care Pathway.
- Schools factoring in the key elements in the GMC's outcome requirements, ethical guidance and the five Priorities for Care.
- Schools placing considerable emphasis on end of life education in the context of the elderly and frail.
- The practical experiential opportunities available for students.
- Coverage of skills related to professional and human factors.
- We shared the analysis of the responses with HEE to inform their review.

# Postgraduate education and CPD



- **Foundation programme curriculum** coverage on end of life care covers a number of areas.
- **Coverage in specialty training curricula** is very broad.
- **Generic professional capabilities (see left):** The framework describes the human qualities required of doctors, themes integral to all clinical care, but particularly end of life care.
- **Continuing professional development (CPD) app, launched in 2015.** The app is designed to help all doctors plan, carry out and evaluate their CPD.

# Partnership working and co-creation

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# 2016 End of Life Care Campaign

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## Useful links

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### **Medical students poll**

Open until 5 June and available at:

<http://gmcuk.poll daddy.com/s/end-of-life-care-medical-students-survey>

### **Link to the NCPC films**

<http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/28965.asp>

### **Link to our campaign pages**

[www.gmc-uk.org/end\\_of\\_life\\_care](http://www.gmc-uk.org/end_of_life_care)

## Questions

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- What can we do collectively to strengthen end of life care curricula for all stages of education and training?
- How can we work together to sustain the focus on end of life care education and training throughout a doctor's career?
- What are the key barriers to achieving this?  
How can we work together to overcome these?