EXPLAINING THE ROLE OF THE PALLIATIVE CARE CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST (CNS) IN HOSPITAL TEAMS

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Macmillan CNSs in Palliative Care
BACKGROUND

- **Palliative Care** – person centred approach to physical symptoms, psychological, social, spiritual distress and cultural needs in patients with life limiting conditions, to optimise quality of life for patients & their family or friends

- **Specialist** – expert level, by multi-professional team, to manage persisting, severe or complex problems

- **Teaching Hospital** – 1500 beds: A&E, renal, cardiology, oncology, haematology, Teenage Cancer Unit...
  - 30% of case load is End of Life Care
COMPLEXITY

- Nursing considered a complex activity (EANS, 2019)

- Nursing value is difficult to measure

- CNS role increasingly requires justification in terms of ‘value for money’ (Marples, et al 2011)
REASONS FOR RESEARCH

- To prove worth/value in the role of the CNS in Palliative Care

- To highlight benefit to hospital palliative care patients gained from contact with CNSs in Palliative Care
SEARCH STRATEGY

- 2 CNSs - with support of wider CNS team, researcher and research librarian
- 4 databases: Cinahl, Medline, Pubmed, Embase
- Searched on title & abstract using following terms
  - palliative care
  - terminal care
  - acute care
  - nurse specialists
  - clinical nurse specialists
  - advanced nursing practice
SEARCH STRATEGY CONTINUED...

- 123 articles selected, reduced to 26 articles following review of abstracts

- 26 articles reduced to 6 articles following review of whole article:
  - Box chart

- 6 articles chosen for full review
  - Critical Appraisal Skills Programme Tools
RESULTS


- **Skilbeck and Payne (2003)** Researched the aspect of emotional care of CNS Role, but benefit to patients not documented. Acute, hospice and community settings.

- **Lloyd, Williams and Payne (2003)** Highlighted the importance of CNS dealing with depression, but identified training needs. Acute and community setting
RESULTS CONTINUED…

- **Hall et al (2013)** Value of CNS providing a seven day service. Acute setting.


- **Coller and Blythe (2017)** Research proposal to investigate the importance of the palliative care CNS role. Acute and community setting.
KEY THEMES

- Nothing found in the literature that would help measure service in terms of worth
- Only certain aspects of the role highlighted by the research studies and not the CNS in Palliative Care role as a whole
- Complexity/Complex processes of the role not detailed
- Common theme ‘co-ordinator’ or ‘keyworker’
- 50% of articles over 10 years old
- Gap in literature to support and justify CNS in Palliative Care contribution/role
NEXT STEPS...

- Share at local research network
- Introduce outcome measures
- Need for further research identified
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