**“We needed it sooner, and we needed it to be better explained”:**

**A qualitative evaluation of a new hospice@home service.**

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Purpose: This study evaluated the service experiences of a new hospice@home provision in order to ascertain which aspects of the service were meeting objectives, and which dimensions needed to adapt to better meet the needs of hospice patients and their families.

Methodology: We used the Trajectory Touchpoint Technique (TTT), a newly validated methodology that encourages in-depth narratives encompassing the whole palliative care experience, to collect rich data from 49 hospice@home patients and family caregivers.

Results: The care provided to patients is outstanding and there are few dimensions of physical care and pain management that are unmet. Hospice@Home provide an invaluable service to families that are often facing crisis and an inability to cope. Hospice@Home is avoiding hospital admissions and greatly aiding people to achieve their preferred place of death. However, more needs to be done before the core service is provided in terms of improved communications in order to overcome the misconceptions of hospice and to alleviate the fear of ‘strangers in my home’ among caregivers. There also needs to be better co-ordination between referring clinicians in order to ensure that patients and their families receive this much needed service earlier in the disease trajectory.

Conclusion: Aging populations and stagnant morbidity means the need for palliative care will increase. Palliative care costs less than treatments that focus on cure, and home-based palliative care can help avoid unnecessary and costly hospital admissions. In shaping services and planning for this future provision, palliative care service providers need to understand the whole service experience, not just aspects of clinical care. Our study demonstrates the value of qualitative narratives to uncover these unmet needs and aids providers to better plan for the future.

**Biography**: As a group, the research team has over 50 years’ experience of collecting customer experience data, much of this in health. They have published in a wide range of academic journals and presented at over 100 conferences nationally and internationally. For the last 5 years they have focused almost exclusively on palliative care services, and have recently accepted an invitation to give evidence to the UK Government’s All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hospice and Palliative Care.

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