

Building Research Capacity for Coastal, Rural and Low-income Communities in Palliative and End of Life Care

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What is the problem?

Across the East of England, our population is aging. As people age, the need for palliative care increases. Those that live in rural and coastal areas may find it harder to access care. Towards the end of their life, this can be even more difficult. Research can improve care for these people and support the professionals that care for them. However most research happens in big cities close to universities, and we want to change this.

What did we do?

This project used Research Capability Funding to explore how we can improve palliative care research in rural and coastal areas. To find out more about this problem, we did three things. We looked at what other research has found about working together to improve palliative care research. Next, we spoke with people with serious illness and carers for their views on research. Finally, we asked health care professionals what might help them to be able to do more research.

What did we find?

We found that people in coastal and rural areas struggle to access the services to support them in the way that they should. People told us what changes would benefit them most, and what would help them to take part in research projects. Healthcare professionals told us the barriers to taking part in research, and ideas of how to improve these.

Some examples of what we learned are provided below:

People want to share their stories;
allow time for this and make sure
that it doesn't feel rushed

Approaches that are local and
personable, such as a "friendly
face" build trust & understanding.

Research involvement needs to
feel meaningful to "know that you
are making a difference"

Provide flexible, practical support
to enable participation e.g. carer
support

When we looked at other research in the area, we found what helps make a successful research partnership, which gave us ideas of how to set up ours.

The Healing Harbour, a local charity, helped us meet with people in the community. Working with coastal charities was found to be important in having conversations about research. They are interested in partnering with researchers going forward to help deliver better care to those that need it most.

What will we do next?

We have spoken to the people that took part in our project to explain what we have found. This work helped us to make professional connections across the East of England to start forming a research partnership. We used the insights gained to secure further funding for a research facilitator to help build research capacity. Funded by the NIHR Regional Delivery Network, this important role will help hospices across the East of England get more involved in research, increasing opportunities for involvement across our coastal and rural areas.

People that took part are interested in working with researchers on future research projects.

How can I find out more?

More information about the project is available here: [Improving palliative care services for coastal and rural communities | ARC East of England](#)



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