

Attitudes of staff to conducting research in a hospice inpatient unit



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Introduction

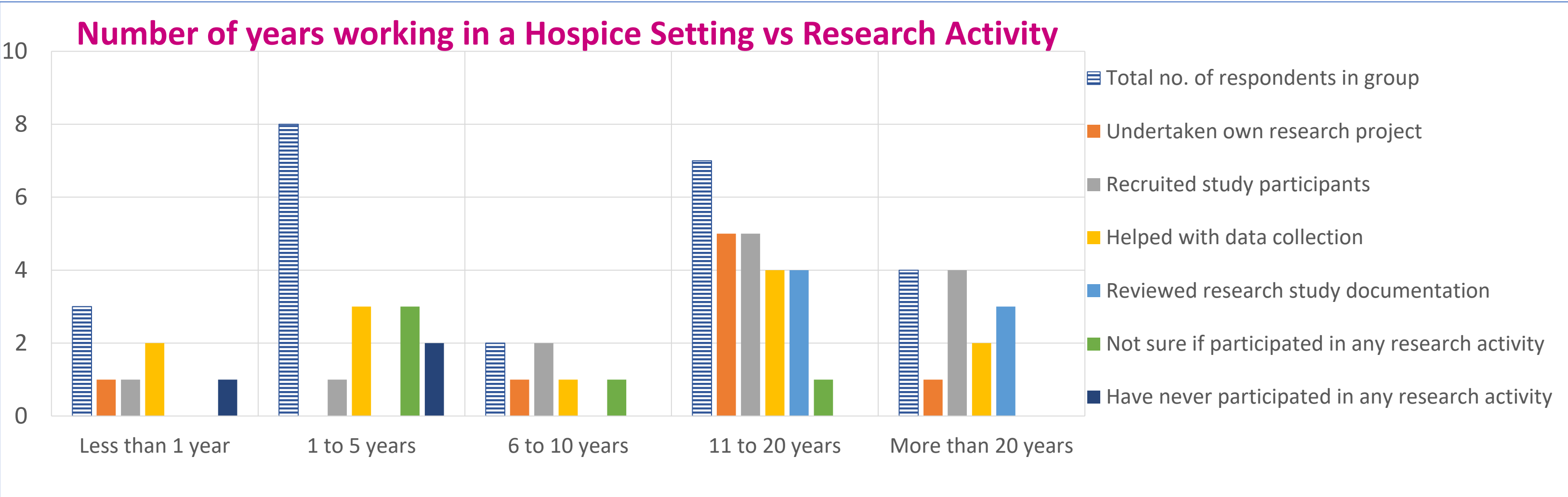
Hospices are encouraged to be research active and contribute to the evidence base. Participating in research studies requires engagement by staff to assist with recruitment and implementation. During participation in a research study requiring recruitment of inpatients on our hospice inpatient unit (IPU), we sought to understand the views of IPU staff members about research being conducted on the ward.

Method

An anonymous online survey hosted on Survey Monkey was sent to nurses and doctors working on the IPU. Responses were collected between April and July 2023. Questions focused on their own experiences of contributing to research and their views about research taking place on a hospice IPU.

Results

We received 24 responses (8 doctors, 16 nurses).



6 doctors and 2 senior nurses had undertaken their own research projects, 5 (83%) of these were in a Hospice setting.

All 8 doctors had helped to recruit patients to a research study.

3 nurses (all with less than 5 years experience of working in a hospice) had not yet contributed to research activity so far in their careers.

19 (79%) of respondents had undertaken an audit including all 8 doctors and 11 nurses.

21 respondents (85.7%) were supportive of research and 18 (75%) felt it was extremely or very important that research is undertaken in hospice IPU settings.

18 (75%) respondents stated that patients and families were usually happy to be approached about participating in research but some expressed concerns about approaching patients.

“The majority of patients and carers I have spoken to about research are keen to be involved even if it doesn't help them they are often happy to take part if it might benefit others in the future”
Doctor

“Attitudes to dying vary considerably and this will impact on how you feel about engaging in research, some nurses are resistant to any change others embrace it with enthusiasm”
Nurse

“I believe our patients and their families have been through a lot by the time they get to the hospice and wanting to die with dignity not be involved in a research study when many of them may have been involved in trial drugs during their treatment that may not have worked”
Nurse

- Barriers to engaging in research included:
- lack of time
 - concerns about burdening patients and families
 - lack of staff confidence in undertaking research
 - paternalism
 - causing potential harm to patients if implementing an intervention
 - resistance to change.



“Finding the right time to discuss it can be challenging when seeing very unwell patients or their relatives as not usually a priority for them”.
Doctor

Perhaps a feeling that research is not for them or not relevant or they are not interested in the stereotypical understanding of 'research'.”
Doctor

“I think there is a worry that ‘trial’ interventions have a risk of producing symptoms we actively try to avoid or minimise and these will impact on the quality of time left for the patient and family”
Nurse

“Lack of understanding about how research could actually benefit the patients and their care”
Nurse

Conclusions

Nurses and doctors working on our hospice IPU are supportive of research taking place on the ward but note a number of barriers to research engagement. Having a better understanding of these challenges will help the research team to support colleagues in future studies.