

MEDIA RELEASE

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RCGP and Marie Curie research funding to improve primary care for terminally ill

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and Marie Curie are calling for applications for a fellowship that will fund vital research into improving primary care services for people living with terminal illnesses and their families.

The two organisations have highlighted the need for more high-quality research to increase the evidence base for palliative and end of life care, an area that they say is significantly underfunded.

The £40,000 grant will be awarded to research that addresses pressing issues in palliative and end of life care related to general practice; namely the provision of out-of-hours services and the interaction between primary care and social care.

Provision of out-of-hours care for terminally ill patients has previously been identified by patients, carers and clinicians as the highest priority for palliative care research. An exercise, led by Marie Curie and involving around 30 other supporting organisations and groups,¹ highlighted the importance of 24/7 services to aspects of care including effective symptom management, helping patients avoid crises, and enabling care at home and in the community.

A previous survey of GPs also showed that only 39% believe that their terminally ill patients get adequate access to care at night and at weekends.²

Dr Catherine Millington Saunders, RCGP and Marie Curie Clinical Lead for End of Life Care, said:

“Over 500,000 people die in the UK every year; one person every minute. GPs play a key role in the effective delivery of high quality palliative care and end of life care for all those who need it, and End of Life Care remains a priority area for the RCGP. As an evidence informed discipline, it is vital that we keep investing in research which can make a real difference to the way that care is delivered. This fellowship is a really exciting opportunity from the RCGP and Marie Curie, and I am so pleased that it is being offered again in 2018.”

Dr Sabine Best, Head of Research, Marie Curie, said:

“We at Marie Curie are focussed on enabling research that will have a real and significant impact on clinical practice, and ultimately the quality of care that people living with terminal illnesses and their families receive. This research funding partnership with the RCGP is a great example of that and we hope that it will attract proposals that offer innovative responses to the challenges faced in providing high-quality care and support via primary care services.”

A joint RCGP Marie Curie fellowship has previously been awarded to Dr Huw Williams, an Honorary Research Fellow at Cardiff University and GP Partner at Westway Surgery in Cardiff. His work aims to develop and implement initiatives that will lead to more timely and effective symptom management, give patients better access to out-of-hours services, and increase awareness of patients’ preferences and treatment goals amongst out-of-hours providers.

The call for applications is now open and will close on 31 July 2018. For more information please visit <https://bit.ly/2I47qQJ> or contact us by email SFB@rcgp.org.uk or telephone 020 3188 7594.

Notes to editors

For further information please contact Simon Perry, Senior Media & PR Officer on 0207 599 7713 or email simon.perry@mariecurie.org.uk.

About Marie Curie Research

We're the UK's largest charitable funder of palliative and end of life care research. Our research investment aims to improve end of life care for people with terminal illness, their carers and families.

About Marie Curie – care and support through terminal illness

- Please note – we are now called 'Marie Curie' (not Marie Curie Cancer Care)
- Marie Curie is the UK's leading charity for people with any terminal illness. The charity helps people living with a terminal illness and their families make the most of the time they have together by delivering expert hands-on care, emotional support, research and guidance. Marie Curie employs more than 2,700 nurses, doctors and other healthcare professionals, and with its nine hospices around the UK, is the largest provider of hospice beds outside the NHS.
- If you are in need of support, or have any questions about any aspect of terminal illness, call the Marie Curie Information & Support Line free on **0800 090 2309** or visit www.mariecurie.org.uk/help.

About the Royal College of General Practitioners

The Royal College of General Practitioners is a network of more than 52,000 family doctors working to improve care for patients. We work to encourage and maintain the highest standards of general medical practice and act as the voice of GPs on education, training, research and clinical standards.

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References

¹ Palliative and end of life care Priority Setting Partnership (PeolcPSP), January 2015 See here:

<http://www.jla.nihr.ac.uk/priority-setting-partnerships/palliative-and-end-of-life-care/>

² Less than half of GPs believe the majority of their patients' pain is relieved all the time. March 2014 See here:

<https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/media/press-releases/marie-curie-calls-for-around-the-clock-care-for-terminally-ill-in-england/103025>