Implementing Outcome Measures in Palliative Care: Putting the Evidence into Practice

Dawkins M, De Wolf-Linder S (co-first author), Daveson BA, Witt J, Murtagh FEM

Background
Measuring palliative care outcomes is widely advocated with little evidence on how best to implement measures into practice. The UK-based Outcome Assessment and Complexity Collaborative (OACC) is implementing outcome measures (OMs) into palliative care practice, and building evidence on how best this can be done.

Aim
To apply systematic review recommendations on implementing OMs into clinical practice across palliative care and review results.

Recommendations to be implemented
i. **Tailored implementation** using appropriate facilitators tailored to characteristics of each team
ii. **Educational intervention** prior to implementation on how and when measures are used and suggestions of how they may be integrated into practice
iii. **Timely feedback** of results at both patient and service level
iv. **Use of a facilitator** working alongside clinicians throughout the implementation process to address concerns as they arise

Conclusions
The four strategies were successful. Feedback is especially powerful in influencing attitudes towards the use of OMs but implementation needs time, facilitation and encouragement. The role of QIFs throughout implementation process is key to embed OMs into routine practice.

Observations
Most clinicians are unfamiliar with OMs and question their clinical relevance. Attitudes to use change as benefits become apparent. Resistance is offset by increasing rapport and support from the Quality Improvement Facilitator (QIF). An adjustment phase before main data collection enables teams to consider how best to integrate OMs into practice. Feedback impacts on individual patient management, distribution of team workload, organisational quality improvement and understanding of complexity.

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