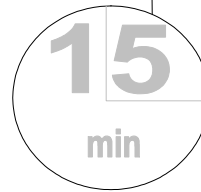


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15 minute Worksheet



The last hours and days

3: The death

Introductory level

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Aim of this worksheet

To explore some issues for patients and carers at the time of death.

How to use this worksheet

- You can work through this worksheet by yourself, or with a tutor.
- Read the case study below, then work on the questions overleaf.
- The work page is on the right side, the information page is on the left.
- Work any way you want: you can try answering from your own knowledge (in which case fold over the information page), you can use the information page (this is not cheating- you learn as you find the information), or you can use other sources of information
- It should take you about 15 minutes. If anything is unclear, discuss it with a colleague.
- If you think any information is wrong or out of date let us know
- Use the activity on the back page and take this learning into your workplace.

Case Study

Michael is a 57 year old man with severe learning disability who lives in a community home with three other men with learning disability. Michael was diagnosed with gastric carcinoma some months ago, but presented too late for treatment. He has begun to deteriorate rapidly, is smoking fewer cigarettes and now has difficulty swallowing his tablets. In the last few days he has become extremely weak and unable to move in bed without assistance.

He is now comatose and close to death.

Reflect

Think back to last patient who died with you present.

NB. If you find this hard because of a difficult personal experience then ask a colleague about their experience.

Q How did it seem for the patient?

Q How did it seem for the partner, relative or friend?

Q How did you feel?

Michael drifts into coma and dies peacefully four days later, with his family at his bed side.

Write

What can you do and what can you say?

Michael's mother asks what is going to be put on the death certificate and is a post mortem necessary.

Q What do you say?

FURTHER ACTIVITY: The Death

Reflect on a patient who died recently:
–how did you feel?

FURTHER READING: The Death

Journal articles

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Owen C. Tennant C. Levi J. Jones M. Cancer patients' attitudes to final events in life: Wish for death, attitudes to cessation of treatment, suicide and euthanasia. *Psycho-Oncology*. 1994; **3**(1): 1-9.

Seamark DA. Williams S. Hall M. Lawrence CJ. Gilbert J. Dying from cancer in community hospitals or a hospice: Closest lay carers' perceptions. *British Journal of General Practice*. 1998; **48**(431): 1317-21.

Steinhauser KE. Clipp EC. Tulsky JA. Evolution in measuring the quality of dying. *Journal of Palliative Medicine*. 2002; **5**(3): 407-14.

Wenman-Larsen A. Tishelman C. Advanced home care for cancer patients at the end of life: a qualitative study of hopes and expectations of family caregivers. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*. 2002; **16**(3): 240-7.

Book resources

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Current Learning In Palliative care
An accessible learning programme for health care professionals

Fifty seven 15 minute worksheets are available on:

- An introduction to palliative care (3 worksheets)
- Helping the patient with pain (9 worksheets)
- Helping the patient with symptoms other than pain (11 worksheets)
- Moving the ill patient (2 worksheets)
- Psychological needs (8 worksheets)
- Helping patients with reduced hydration and nutrition (8 worksheets)
- Procedures in palliative care (4 worksheets)
- Understanding and helping the person with alternative communication (learning disabilities) (5 worksheets)
- The last hours and days (4 worksheets)
- Bereavement (3 worksheets)

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Helping the Patient with Advanced Disease: a Workbook. Regnard C. ed.

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