OUT OF HOURS PALLIATIVE CARE

The out of hours period covers from 18.30 to 08.00 on weekdays, and from 18.30 on a Friday through to 08.00 on a Monday, and on bank and public holidays. Out of hours palliative care is just one component, albeit an important one, of the out of hours services needed by patients in the last years of life at home.

Using keyword searches, the HRCS dataset was searched for relevant grant abstracts. The keywords brought up 4,420 relevant grant abstracts. The keywords brought up 4,420 searches for all 83 priorities. Of these, only 12 related to the priority on out of hours palliative care. These 12 grants amount to £1,306,820 of funding, which is 0.06% of the total health research spend in the 2014 HRCS dataset. The distribution of this funding is displayed in the graph below.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

14,934 grant abstracts were searched using keyword searches for all 83 priorities. Of these, only 12 related to the priority on out of hours palliative care. These 12 grants amount to £1,306,820 of funding, which is 0.06% of the total health research spend in the 2014 HRCS dataset. The distribution of this funding is displayed in the graph below.

However, of these 12 grants, only 4 are considered “directly” related to the out of hours palliative care priority, with a specific link to 24 hour support for patients at the end of life and their carers and families, reducing the amount to only £516,924, which is just 0.03% of the health spend in 2014.

Of this directly related amount, 3.8% comes from Marie Curie (£19,483), and the rest is governmental funding. There are only two funders, direct and indirect, with a combined research funding of £18,932.

As is highlighted above, the stroke health category received the highest proportion of the total funding relating to out of hours palliative care.

DISCUSSION

Out of hours palliative care has been identified as the top priority for research by carers, patients and clinicians. The 2014 HRCS research snapshot shows that there is little ongoing research in out of hours palliative care.

In addition, it has been found that the specific need for out of hours palliative care has not been systematically explored in research to date. There is a lack of high quality research evaluating existing out of hour palliative services. High quality implementation and evaluation studies into out of hours palliative care are required to establish national standards.