

Equitable palliative care needs assessment

What is your role in the project?

By better understanding the needs of patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and their informal carers, the University of Leeds will develop interventions supporting earlier integration of palliative care to meet these needs. We will also take part in shaping new technology to support the health care pathway. Through the Academic Unit for Palliative care at St Gemma's, we will take part in the project's randomised trial to evaluate the effect of equitable needs assessment in the UK context.

How do you plan to do that?

We will undertake a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative studies and Artificial Intelligence methods. We will interview patients with COPD, their family carers and healthcare professionals and will develop a holistic framework for equitable needs assessment. This will consider individual difference and broad contextual factors. We will also use Artificial Intelligence to help us gain a broader understanding by exploring social content to gain more insights into patients' and carers' experiences. This will allow us to apply the framework on digital data and explore its wider impact. Following the needs assessment framework, we will develop an intervention (including needs analysis and holistic support) to be tested within a randomised clinical trial.

What are the challenges you could be facing?

The timetable is very tight to achieve everything, but we will work hard. We will take a cautious approach to applying Artificial Intelligence mitigating the known risks of transparency, accountability and bias.

How does your work contribute to the overall objectives of the project?

Our work will help to support a needs assessment and earlier integration of support for patients with COPD. This will lead to a novel model of Palliative Care, based on early integration and personalized pathways addressed specifically to older people with complex chronic conditions. We will contribute to the novel use of technology in palliative care, prototyping solutions that can have wider impact in the digital era.

How do you think the project will improve the quality of life of older people with complex chronic conditions?

We hope that it will enable the needs of these patients to be met better and earlier than in current practice. Most importantly, this will be done in an equitable manner, taking into account individual differences and contextual factors.