

1.4 Does advanced care planning for older people help to reduce unplanned hospital admissions and improve quality of life?

Lay Summary

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Advance Care Planning (ACP) encourages a person to think about their future health and express their wishes about what future health care they would like to receive and when. This planning is done in consultation with care providers and loved one. This means that when, or if, the time comes to receive care and they are too unwell to make their own decisions, their wishes will be known and can be taken into account. ACP is an entirely voluntary process which helps decision making especially when a person is nearing end-of-life.

The UK has a rapidly growing ageing population. ACP is strongly encouraged for older people and those with a life-limiting illness as a means of ensuring that the individual receives the care that they want. This can help reduce unwanted interventions, such as hospital admissions, towards and at end of life. For example, there is some evidence to suggest that people with dementia who live in care homes and have an ACP are less likely to be admitted to hospital or have unnecessary or intrusive treatments than those who don't. There has been no evidence synthesis relating to the delivery and impact of ACP on a primary care population, despite ACP being a skill GPs are expected to demonstrate.

The aim of our review is to summarise all of the current evidence to determine the effectiveness of ACP in reducing unplanned hospital admissions and improving quality of life. It will also explore the views and experiences of older people, their families and the health care professionals involved in providing the ACP intervention. The review will be the first to include studies of different design (a mixed methods review), not limited by study design, setting and/or patient prognosis. The findings of our review will be considered by participants (patients and public) with experience of ACP, who will act as an advisory group, to support the interpretation and dissemination of review findings.