IDENtiFy study: Supporting the identity needs of older people with frailty.

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The F word

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Negative associations act as barriers to engaging older people who do not wish to be defined as frail (Age UK and BGS 2015)

People experiencing frailty report lower levels of well-being and a diminished sense of self which can further lead to poorer health outcomes (Kojima et al 2016)

Some older people have expressed a fear of being labelled as frail as they feel that this will lead to dependency

So what does old look like?

IDENtiFy study: Supporting the identity needs of older people with frailty.

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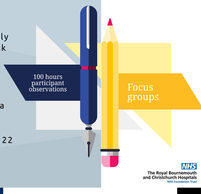
Christchurch Day Hospital has an innovative service for older people with frailty and received consistently good clinical outcomes and feedback from patients

The aim of this study was to understand the processes which underpin the relationship between a patients identity and these outcomes.
Two phase ethnographic study over 22 months



Findings

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Findings

This research is creating an evidence base in the area of identity in older people with frailty. The study is ongoing but initial themes identified relate to;

Recognition of life limiters in older people with frailty	• Fears of losing independence • Physical restrictions • Reduced capacity • Fatigue
Fostering capabilities and time given for adapting	• Realistic and meaningful goals • Focus on ability • Minimum 6 week sessions
Feeling cared for and welcomed is important	• Feeling cared for allows people to feel valued and more engaged • Feeling welcomed reduces fear
Supporting independence and individuality	• Comprehensive personalised assessment and plans
Compassion for colleagues and patients	• Peer praise and team feedback • Sharing emotions is embraced
Nurturing environment supports positivity	• Colourful surroundings are engaging and positive • Volunteers provide valuable peer support

"it's so nice to have a garden to look at while you're waiting, I live in a flat and don't get out to see them"

"all the bright colours, I've never seen anything like that before. It makes you happy, cheers you up"

" as a student I worked in another day hospital environment up in the Midlands and basically I remember it as being grey, do you get what I mean, so it was grey, people were running around doing infusions, people were running around doing blood tests, yeah there was a little bit of therapy but it didn't all link up. Whereas here its bright pink and bright yellow, smiling faces and cups of tea and there's a radio and everyone's eating and drinking "

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Bernie: it's like that lady we had recently and they used to go around to their friends and do card games and then she had an accident and couldn't do it they put her in a home which she hated because it was mostly dementia people so we used to play cards with her because she really enjoyed it

Moderator: when she came here?

Bernie: yes, we used to get the cards out and play anything

Sean: the biggest thing that Hannah has got out of these sessions is that it has focus her realisation that however she feels there is still things that can be achieved andfocusing her to the extent that I can see a massive difference between her mobility, it's the fatigue side of it and that's the PSP nothing is going to be able to sort that out, but her outlook on life has been dramatically improved purely and simply because you guys have taken the time to show her that there is a way forward.

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Discussion

Developing and delivering services for frailty is challenging.

Focus must expand past debating how we academically define and measure frailty and shift towards understanding the impact of living with frailty on a persons identity.

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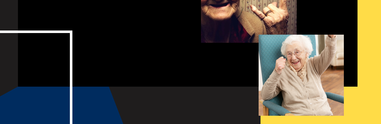
These findings may be important in supporting a sense of self for older people with frailty by creating a positive and nurturing environment.

People with frailty wan't to feel welcomed, have time to adapt to their changing identities and staff are approachable and feel supported themselves.

Managing patient expectations and supporting a positive sense of self for both patients and staff is key to continued therapeutic engagement.

Thank you!

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