Conclusion The project demonstrates by empowering staff and building confidence, we have positively impacted on the choices available for patients and their families regarding the donation of tissues after death. Further education will be delivered to embed and ensure sustainability with this change in practice. A policy and procedure to standardise practice is being finalised.

In 1972, Stockwell published her controversial research (“The unpopular patient”) which described nurses’ relationships with patients who they perceived as “difficult”, and focussed on negative stereotyping. This was based around nurses giving preferential care to favoured patients.

Does this exist in palliative care, which prides itself on gold standard and person-centred care, across all care settings and particularly in specialist palliative care units and hospices?

During the author’s work in various palliative care settings and varying roles, it has been evident through a variety of approaches that even in palliative care patients can still be perceived as “unpopular”. This can, in turn, exacerbate that patient’s unpopular behaviour further (Goffman, 1963).

Dame Cicely Saunders stated, “You matter because you are you. We will do all we can to help you live until you die”. Equitable care access should prevent stereotyping, however the question is, do staff still label patients and families as unpopular? Is this simply an attitude and opinion? Does it affect the care they receive?

A brief literature review explores the concept of the unpopular patient in various care settings but not in palliative care. This work will complete a detailed literature review of “the unpopular patient”, the principles of palliative care and equitable access, and will be presented at the conference.

In future, research is required: initially this will be small scale through questionnaires to staff in a variety of palliative care settings and roles, using methodology similar to the original research. Following this, focus groups will be held to explore the emerging themes in more detail, and possibly individual interviews may be held with specific staff for richer data.

It is hoped that publishing and sharing this work will make staff working in palliative care self-aware about these attitudes.

Background Skin integrity is key to ongoing care and comfort of patients towards end of life (Langemo, 2006). Palliative care aims to ease suffering with the raising prevalence of pressure area deterioration (EPUAP, 2009). As patients’ function and nutritional state declines, understanding the early risk of developing a pressure ulcer is pivotal. Prevention is key (NICE, 2015).

Funding, for a year-long project, was awarded by the Queen’s Nursing Institute to a group of hospice community palliative nurses.

Methods Three focus group meetings with patients and carers to discuss their pressure ulcer risk awareness and information needs.

Palliative care community nurses attended training. Meetings with external collaborative services, including community nurses, care agencies and care commissioning groups.

To compare the recording of Waterlow score before and after project implementation (Waterlow, 2005).

Results 94% of patients referred to the hospice by October 2015, had a Waterlow recording. Providing evidence for appropriate and timely pressure ulcer prevention interventions.

The focus group developed an information leaflet, ‘Skin Awareness’ advocating self-care as ‘Awareness is Key’.

100% of community based registered nurses received Waterlow Assessment training.

Awareness has been raised throughout the hospice multi-disciplinary team and development relationships with primary care agencies.

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Conclusion The project has been vital in reducing the discomfort palliative care patients’ experience towards end-of-life.

Further research is being developed, as there is a paucity of evidence in understanding the skin care of community palliative care patients, towards end-of-life.