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Exploring the Views of Barnsley People on Talking About Dying and Death

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Background:

There is a general perception held by hospice and palliative care practitioners that society is reluctant to talk about dying and death, which can be detrimental to dealing with bereavement. A collation supported by the National Council for Palliative Care called *Dying Matters* concurs as does The Yorkshire and The Humber Strategic Health Authority (2008) who stated recently that significant work needs to be undertaken to promote activities which break down taboos around death and dying.

The experience of Barnsley Hospice is that there is fantastic support from local people via the donation of funds, but that most people are reluctant to engage in discussion about dying and death.

Aims:

Barnsley Hospice has commissioned research to promote a more open discussion about dying and death within its local community.

Specific objectives of the study are:

- To explore the perceptions of dying and death from the perspective of the general public and health care practitioners.
- To identify barriers to a more open discussion of dying and death within the local area.
- To propose methods of increasing participation of talking about dying and death within the local area.

Methods:

A qualitative, interactive methodology is proposed to produce the data and insights required to address the potentially sensitive nature of the study objectives. The main method of data collection proposed will be through two focus groups to enable exploration of a wide range of views from a variable population from the general community and closely associated professionals.

Proposed conclusions:

Systematic and analytical coding of the data will follow with the objective of generating themes and uncovering potentially important issues relevant to improvements in support and care. The researchers will be open and cognizant of the possibility of emergent hypotheses that could result in further research and investigation.

(298 words)