Delivering Palliative and End of Life Care to People with Alcohol and Drug Problems: Challenges and Opportunities

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Who

- * Hospice professionals
- * Substance use service professionals

How

- * Self-completion survey
- * Focus groups
- * Individual interviews

"...we have a fridge that people can put alcohol in, we've had a few patients recently who were alcohol dependent and it's been open and they've had alcohol and it's accepted that that's what they need and we work with them..."

Challenges

Identification

No routine assessment; complex and multiple needs

Symptom and pain management

Fears about over- or under-prescribing

Stigma

Negative and stigmatising attitudes from health and social care professionals

Communication and support

Talking or asking about the 'other' issue; lack of clear pathways

Opportunities

Innovative individual practice including advocacy with primary, acute and social care

Good relationships between some service providers

Commitment to non-judgemental practice: person centred and needs led

Providing **practical solutions** and practical and holistic support

"I don't think being judgemental and trying to adjust or stop behaviour that's been going on for decades, in some cases, for somebody who's imminently dying, is appropriate, but it certainly does affect how you manage their symptoms"

"...it seems completely alien to us why somebody would drink themselves to death but when you understand the context of somebody's life and the things they've been through, it makes sense..."