

Lancaster University and King's College London to train researchers in end-of-life care

Two UK universities, Lancaster and King's College London will train international researchers in palliative care as part of a € 4million drive to improve care and its quality in Europe and identify tools to improve it, funded by the EU.

This unprecedented investment in palliative care reflects the dramatic increase in the aging population which Europe will see in the next few years. The EUROIMPACT will train 12 junior and 4 experienced researchers at six universities and research institutes in Belgium, the Netherlands, UK, Norway and Italy, all at the forefront of palliative care research training representing a wide spectrum of disciplines and professions.

Lancaster University's International Observatory on End of Life Care will provide the introductory training for all 12 early stage researchers and will co-ordinate all the research training across the whole consortium. Two early stage researchers (Evangelia Papavasiliou from Greece and Martin Loucka from the Czech Republic) started in April and will be in the Observatory for three years. Both are doing their PhDs in Palliative Care. Evangelia is researching the use of palliative sedation and Martin is researching the development of palliative care in Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. These projects build upon existing research in the Observatory. Lancaster will also be appointing a post doctoral research fellow for 18 months starting in 2012.

Richard Harding from the Cicely Saunders Institute at King's said: 'We are excited to be a partner in Euro Impact and to create new opportunities for future leaders in palliative care research for Europe. We are able to deliver a unique international experience creating collaboration across leading centres accessing our world-class learning resources.'

'The Euro Impact Fellows are learning new skills and creating new knowledge that will ultimately lead to better care for patients with life-limiting disease and their families, and will enable us to raise the standard of care for European citizens facing the end of life.'

The 12 Fellows from across Europe will participate in the postgraduate palliative care education programme at the Cicely Saunders Institute, recently funded by Cicely Saunders international. Barbara Antunes, a clinical psychologist from Portugal and Katrien Moens, a nurse from Belgium, will also join the clinical and academic teams at the Institute.

Professor Sheila Payne, Director of Lancaster's International Observatory on End of Life Care said 'This is a real opportunity to improve palliative care and Lancaster is centrally involved in training the future generation of research leaders in Europe.'

The project will collaborate with several European organisations in palliative care and geriatrics. Professor Luc Deliens of the End-of-Life Care Research Group of the University of Ghent and Vrije Universiteit Brussel in Belgium is coordinating the project, with Professor Lieve Van den Block.

Notes

The European Union has set aside four million euros under the Seventh Framework programme to improve and coordinate research into palliative care via the EUROIMPACT project. EUROIMPACT stands for European Intersectoral and Multi-disciplinary Palliative Care Research Training.

Established in 2003, the International Observatory on End of Life Care at Lancaster University is now a globally recognised centre of excellence for research in palliative and end of life care. In the latest

Times subject league table, subjects allied to Medicine at Lancaster were ranked 5th in the UK for excellence.