

Transcript

Some of the carers in the study described what might be considered a fairly 'neutral' experience: not particularly good or bad, and in line with their prior expectations.

However, it was also clear that some families had a very negative experience of the care of dying patients on the ward. Some difficulties arose from the environment and lack of privacy. Others were clearly related to poor communication and lack of consideration from staff.

It is hard to change the layout of a ward, ensure that dying patients can be moved to side rooms, or enable relatives of dying patients to have access to a quiet room and facilities to rest and make refreshments. This should clearly be a goal for improving future care.

However, it should not be hard to improve the experience of families through better communication and greater consideration and courtesy on the part of ward staff.

In particular, staff should ensure that families are well informed about care decisions, including anticipated prognosis, and know what to expect throughout the process of dying. Staff should regularly check relatives' understanding of the situation.

They should also acknowledge relatives' presence in the offer of their support:

Small things can make a big difference.