

## **Palliative Care in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

### **Seminar summary by Dr Erica Borgstrom, Open University**

In June 2017 we invited two speakers –Prof Scott Murry and Dr Karen Chumbley - to discuss the ways in which palliative care delivery can be changed to widen access during this century.

Scott shared several videos he had created based on years of research about trajectories of dying and the four dimensions. An example of these videos can be viewed in this BMJ analysis piece about palliative care from diagnosis to death:

<http://www.bmj.com/content/356/bmj.j878>

This work overlaps the four dimensions of palliative care – physical, social, psychological and spiritual – with trajectories of dying. By doing this, Scott was highlighting how changes in other dimensions prior or alongside physical decline could serve as indicators of palliative care need and potential indicator for intervention.

Karen spoke about the work she is involved in at St Columba Hospice in Colchester. She highlighted the known inequalities that the hospice are seeking to address: postcode inequalities, inequalities of choice, inequalities due to diagnosis, and inequalities in marginalised groups. In her presentation she discussed how the hospice use their data to examine their own practices. As a result, for example, they have taken targeted action to increase their work within care homes to improve use of My Care Choice documents. They have also created a building where homeless people can safely receive palliative care.

Both of the speakers spoke about how palliative care access could be changed through targeted efforts, either in identification or in service provision. Audience members challenged the assumption that palliative care is appropriate for or desired by all patients; whilst the speakers agreed that there will be some who may not want it, they both stated that assumptions should not be made and people should have the opportunity to be asked.