

## **Speech launching the Scottish Atlas of Palliative Care**

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Around the world there is growing interest in mapping levels of palliative care provision. Some of this has led to production of atlases. The first one of this kind was published in 2007 – the ‘European Atlas of Palliative Care’ presented the development of specialist palliative care in the 53 countries of the WHO European region.

The second edition of the European atlas was published in 2013. ‘Atlas of Palliative Care in Latin America’ was published in 2012.

Taking it to the global level, the World Health Organisation and the Worldwide Palliative Care Alliance jointly published Global atlas of palliative care at the end of life in 2014.

The purpose of these Atlases is to shed light on the provision of palliative care in varied geographical contexts and to help assess the gap between palliative care need and provision.

In the European and global atlases, I mentioned earlier, the entry is for the United Kingdom. In the ranking exercise that followed UK appears on the top of the ranking, which is good news. However, we do not get a picture of palliative care development in Scotland from these.

Therefore, it is necessary to have information about palliative care provision at the national level to inform the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Action and policy making in palliative care in general.

In Scotland, the past few months have seen significant advances in this direction at the national level: last year the Scottish Parliament’s Health and Sport Committee launched an inquiry into the quality and availability of palliative care in Scotland.

In December last year we saw the publication of the Strategic Framework for Action on Palliative and End of Life Care as Scotland’s direct response to 2014 World Health Assembly Resolution calling all governments to integrate palliative care in their national health policies.

Yesterday evening some of us were at the Scottish Parliament for the Hospice UK event marking the publication of the report, ‘The role of hospice care in Scotland’, another piece of vital information. All these and others have highlighted the need for better information about what palliative care provision is available at present in Scotland.

The Audit Scotland report, 'Review of palliative care services in Scotland' published in 2008 provides national level data. But, its 8 years since this was published.

Prof David Clark from the University of Glasgow proposed the idea of mapping current specialist palliative care provision in the country to Professor Craig White, the Divisional Clinical Lead for Healthcare Quality and Strategy Directorate at Scottish Government. In the light of the commitment the government has made to 'support improvements in the collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of data and evidence relating to needs, provision, activity, indicators and outcomes in respect of palliative and end of life care' in the Strategic Framework for Action (commitment 9), the government commissioned this piece of work.

For the purposes of comparability, we decided to follow the format of the European Atlas of palliative care, and we adapted it as required to fit the Scottish palliative care landscape. Colleagues from the ATLANTES, a palliative care research group at the University of Navarra, Spain who developed the European Atlas have very kindly offered us assistance to facilitate this by working with us on designing the survey we used for gathering data. The layout of maps and figures and the attractive design of the document also stem from their work.

The data gathering work for the Scottish Atlas coincided with the preparation of the Scottish Public Health Network report 'Palliative and end of life care in Scotland: the rationale for a public health approach', published earlier this year. This opportunity led us to a collaboration with Dr Michelle Gillies, clinical lecturer in public health who was leading the work on the Scottish Public Health Network report.

We set out to gather relevant data, we devised a strategy and approached the Chief Executive Officers of the independent hospices in Scotland and the Executive Leads for Palliative Care for each National Health Service Board. The result of this exercise is the collection of maps and figures that show levels and types of palliative care provision in each of the NHS board in Scotland.

In addition, we worked with colleagues from various sectors to provide details on the development of palliative care in the areas of policy, education and socio-cultural attitudes over many years. we are grateful to all who contributed to this in different ways.

We do not claim that this Atlas fills all the information gaps we have about palliative care in Scotland. But we believe this is definitely an important step in the right direction. We are hopeful that this will lead to further investigation exploring detailed analysis of specific aspects of palliative care development in Scotland. This is also to be taken as 'work in progress'. We have done our best to capture the current scene of palliative care in Scotland. Please let us know if you spot that we have missed/misrepresented anything here – we would be pleased to incorporate these in our work.

This would wouldn't have been possible without help from: Craig White, Colleagues from ATLANTES team, Amanda Ward for data collection, Prof Scott Murray, expert contribution to the section on education, and all who provided us with data. We have been in consultation with Mark Hazelwood at various stages of this work, sense checked data as we were finalising it. A big thank you!

We now have the data for Scotland that can be compared with other European countries. We will now be able to fit Scotland into the European ranking model recently published in the Journal of Pain and Symptom Management, which we hope will lead to identify areas that may need attention so that access to palliative and end of life care is made available to all who can benefit from it.

The data represented in this Atlas represents the scene at the time of the launch of the Strategic Framework for Action for Palliative and End of Life Care. this would be a logical reference point for comparison 2021 by which time the government hopes, as expressed in the Strategic Framework, to ensure that everyone who needs palliative care will have access to it.

This is a first in more than one sense: the first Scottish Atlas of palliative care. But to our knowledge this is the first Atlas of palliative care at the national level. We hope this will inspire other countries will follow – to engage in national level analysis of palliative care provision to identify gaps and to explore opportunities to deal with them.

On behalf of the co-authors, Prof David Clark and Dr Michelle Gillies, I am delighted to launch the Scottish Atlas of Palliative Care.