

## **CONTROLLING CANCER PAIN: HOW ADEQUATE IS THE GP KNOWLEDGE BASE?**

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### **Aims.**

- 1) To investigate the knowledge of key pain control issues among GPs in Wales.
- 2) To develop a summative scale of GP pain management knowledge.
- 3) To develop a regression model of this GP pain management knowledge scale.

### **Methods.**

Postal questionnaire covering demographic features, with nine questions concerning pain management in advanced cancer. Up to three reminders. For the development of a summative scale, a Delphi panel of 15 GPs and 10 Consultants in Palliative medicine weighted:

- a) the importance of the nine pain questions for GPs, and
- b) the correctness of the responses received.

Using Thurstone methodology, these two weightings were combined to weight respondents' replies, and these summed to give a pain management knowledge score for each G.P.

### **Results.**

Response rate was 67.6%. The pain knowledge summative scale was strongly negatively skewed: 278/399 (69.6%) obtained scores that represented good to excellent answers. Three variables emerged as significant predictors of low-scoring GPs: greater years since qualification, non-membership of RCGP, and graduates of non-UK and London medical schools ( $R^2 = 0.192$ ).

### **Conclusion.**

The majority of GPs have a good grasp of the basics of pain control. Educational efforts are most needed among longer-serving GPs who are non-UK or London graduates, and currently non-members of the RCGP.