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### Narmadha's Background

I work as a specialty doctor in Palliative Medicine in Ardgowan Hospice in Inverclyde. I work across inpatient and community settings.

As a SAS doctor new to the grade in 2022, I opted to complete a MSc in Palliative Care at the University of Glasgow to help me build a strong foundation for a career in specialist palliative care. This was a distance learning, online course over three years. Embarking on this course allowed me to build a structured and sound foundation in symptom management strategies, the history of palliative care and other aspects such as spirituality and bereavement care.

### Learning and Development

Advanced communication skills, clinical leadership and ethics were among the topics touched upon in the program. I was able to apply my learning in real time by leading on quality improvement initiatives, with the aim of improving access to specialist palliative care advice and patients' access to prescriptions following specialist palliative care reviews. The principles of change management that I have learned, alongside the real-life experience of spearheading quality improvement initiatives, stand me in good stead to lead ongoing quality improvement within the hospice and wider community I work in.

Through this program, I was able to carry out original research examining the relationship between socioeconomic deprivation, cause of death and place of death of people with palliative care needs in Inverclyde. The thorough literature review I conducted has given me a better awareness of the factors impacting palliative and end of life care quality for people with palliative care needs who are also experiencing socioeconomic deprivation.

### Impact

This research highlighted the differences in illness trajectories which have an impact on hospital admissions and future care planning. I have been able to use my understanding of these concepts and apply it to future care planning conversations with patients.

Working in an area of high socioeconomic deprivation, this research has allowed me to shine a light on the experience of people with palliative care needs locally. I hope that this research will guide future service development within the wider palliative care ecosystem in the area I work in.

### Next Steps

I have found the experience of pursuing an MSc in Palliative Care very rewarding, especially as an early career SAS doctor. It has provided me structure as I develop my knowledge base in this specialty and has also helped me to identify professional interests such as quality improvement and service development that I would like to develop further.

This opportunity has helped me build my confidence as a SAS doctor. It has enabled me to pursue avenues such as contributing to the Scottish Palliative Care Guidelines and working as one of the SAS Education Advisers for NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and NHS Golden Jubilee.

The funding for the second year of this course was from the SAS Development Fund. The first and third years of the course were funded by Hospice UK and my hospice via the Wolfson Professional Development Grant. I found the application process straightforward and appreciated the support of my Education Adviser in strengthening my application. It is a funding source that I will certainly consider in the future for my professional development.