



King's Research Portal

DOI:

[10.1136/bmj.h6933](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.h6933)

Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication record in King's Research Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Nicholson, C., Maben, J., & Ream, E. (2015). Partnership between healthcare staff and carers on wards. *BMJ*, 351, [h6933]. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.h6933>

Citing this paper

Please note that where the full-text provided on King's Research Portal is the Author Accepted Manuscript or Post-Print version this may differ from the final Published version. If citing, it is advised that you check and use the publisher's definitive version for pagination, volume/issue, and date of publication details. And where the final published version is provided on the Research Portal, if citing you are again advised to check the publisher's website for any subsequent corrections.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Research Portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognize and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the Research Portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the Research Portal

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact librarypure@kcl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

LETTERS



WELCOMING CARERS ON TO THE WARDS

Partnership between healthcare staff and carers on wards

Caroline Nicholson *National Institute for Health Research post doctoral research fellow*¹, Jill Maben *professor of research in nursing*¹, Emma Ream *professor of supportive cancer care, and director of research*²

¹Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, King's College London, London SE1 8WA, UK; ²School of Health Sciences, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK

Jennings and Oliver's correspondence illuminates tensions inherent in carer involvement in secondary care.^{1 2} The knowledge and experience of carers provides essential continuity of care, yet for some carers, admission provides a welcome and much needed break.

The active involvement of carers requires both them and hospital staff—with differentiated expertise and expectations—to understand, appreciate, and work together for the best interests of patients. Sounds simple, but our research on supporting staff to partner with carers of older people in acute hospitals suggests that it is not. Carers want to be acknowledged and valued by hospital staff for their particular expertise and knowledge. To work effectively with carers, hospital staff need support from their managers and the board. As Oliver highlights,² this work does not happen by itself, it needs to be valued. Currently little attention and time is given to supporting frontline staff in this crucial but subterranean work—a below the surface, unrecognised activity, left to the individual discretion of staff members.

Healthy carer-staff partnerships require shared understandings, proactive communication, and trust. Such partnerships need significant support and resource which short staffed wards are currently ill equipped to provide. Developing this capacity in acute hospitals, as our study has been trying to do, is a challenge,

but it is an initiative that has the potential to provide substantial benefits for patients, carers, staff, and the NHS.

The SCIOAS (Establishing Supportive Care needs for frail elders and developing an Intervention to address these in Older Adult acute medical Settings) is a four-phased mixed methods postdoctoral fellowship funded by the National Institute for Health Research. This study is reported by Dr Caroline Nicholson under the terms of the postdoctoral research fellowship issued by the National Institute for Health Research. The views expressed in this letter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the National Health Service, The National Institute for Health Research, or the Department of Health.

Competing interests: None declared.

Full response at: www.bmj.com/content/351/bmj.h6436/rr.

- 1 Jennings R. Welcoming carers on to the wards: too much pressure for some carers? *BMJ* 2015;351:h6435. (3 December.)
- 2 Oliver D. Author's reply to Jennings. *BMJ* 2015;351:h6436. (3 December.)

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2015;351:h6933

© BMJ Publishing Group Ltd 2015