Participant Information Sheet

A SERVICE EVALUATION OF ANIMAL ASSISTED INTERVENTION SERVICES ACROSS UK INTENSIVE CARE UNITS

1. Invitation

You are invited to participate in this service evaluation of animal assisted intervention services for adult critically ill patients across the UK. Participation is voluntary. Below we detail more information about this service evaluation project – please contact us if there is anything unclear, or if there is any additional information you need. Thank you for taking the time read this information sheet.

2. What is the purpose of the study?

Critically ill patients in the intensive care unit (ICU) can experience many psychological consequences including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and loneliness. Animal assisted interventions refer to trained therapy animals, under the supervision of staff and volunteers, who are used to provide psychological support to patients during their ICU admission. There is national UK guidance to support clinicians to deliver these services, however research into this area of practice remains very limited. At present, we do not know how many UK ICUs offer animal assisted interventions services, and if they do, how these services are designed and how they are managed. Characterising current animal assisted interventions service levels across UK ICUs would assist the conduct of future research activity in this area, and support development of future services.

Aims

The aim of this project is to evaluate current animal assisted interventions services across UK ICUs.

Objectives

The objectives of this project are:

1. To determine how many ICUs in the UK offer animal assisted interventions services.
2. To characterise available services including information such as type, format, extent, personnel involved.
3. To explore and review what local oversight is in place at UK ICUs for available services.

3. Why have I been chosen?

You are invited to take part as a clinician at a UK ICU who can act as a principal responder/representative to provide information about whether or not your ICU has any animal assisted interventions services available, and if you do, further details about these services.

4. Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you choose to take part, you can change your mind at any time before you complete the service evaluation survey and withdraw from the project without giving a reason.

5. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you participate, you will complete the electronic survey enclosed with this Information Sheet. If you proceed to complete the survey and submit your responses, you will be giving your consent to participate in the service evaluation, as it is described in this Participant Information Sheet.

The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Broadly, questions cover:

- Whether your ICU has any animal assisted interventions services available, and if so, details about these services e.g. who is involved delivering these services, how often are they available, what animals are involved
- Detail of any local documents related to these services (if they are available) e.g. any guideline, standard operating protocol, or similar. If you indicate that you do have animal assisted interventions services available at your ICU, and you have any local documents related to these services, we will also ask you to send a copy of these documents to us.

You will be given 6 weeks to complete the survey with reminders given during that time.

6. What are the possible risks or disadvantages of taking part?

We do not perceive any major disadvantages or risks of taking part in this study.

7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no perceived benefits at an individual level from taking part. However, the information you provide about your local services will help the design and delivery of future research into this new area of clinical practice, and support development of future services.

8. What if something goes wrong?

If you have any concerns about any aspects of the study, you can contact the Chief Investigator, Dr Bronwen Connolly, b.connolly@qub.ac.uk, 028 9097 6047. Should you remain unhappy and wish to make a formal complaint, you can contact the Research Governance Team at Queen's University Belfast (Telephone: 028 9097 2529; Email: researchgovernance@qub.ac.uk).

9. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Service evaluation survey data and service-related documents will be held securely, in folders on password-protected Queen's University Belfast servers that are only accessible by the Queen's University Belfast research team, for a maximum of five years. Survey participation is anonymous, unless you choose to provide your email address for the purposes of sharing service-related documents and/or for checking response queries; only members of the Queen's University Belfast research team will have access to your email address should you choose to give this. Individual participants and ICUs will not be identified during any reporting or publication.

10. What will happen to the results of the research?

Findings of this service evaluation will be included in an undergraduate BSc Human Biology student dissertation under the supervision of the Chief Investigator. Findings will also be published in a scientific peer-reviewed journal, as well as presented at other relevant multi-professional clinical and research forums e.g. scientific conferences.

11. Who is organising and funding the research?

This service evaluation is being organised by the Chief Investigator, Dr Bronwen Connolly, Senior Lecturer, Critical Care, Queen's University Belfast. There is no funding involved in the design, conduct, or delivery of this service evaluation.

12. Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed by the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences Research Ethics Committee

13. Contact for Further Information

Should you have any further questions or concerns regarding this project, please contact the Chief Investigator:

Dr Bronwen Connolly
Senior Lecturer, Critical Care
Wellcome-Wolfson Institute for Experimental Medicine
Queen's University Belfast
97 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 7BL
b.connolly@qub.ac.uk
028 9097 6047

This research will be conducted in compliance with data protection legislation. For more information about how we look after your information, how to access your rights and who to contact if you have any queries or concerns about data protection please visit the Queen's University Belfast website - https://www.qub.ac.uk/privacynotice/Research/ListofResearchPrivacyNotices/PrivacyNoticeforResearchParticipants.html

Thank you for your interest in this study and for taking the time to read through this information sheet.

CONSENT STATEMENTS

Please read the following consent statements prior to completing the survey

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Participant Information Sheet, v1.0, dated 07/11/23 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and these have been answered fully.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time up until the point of submitting my survey results.
3. I understand the study is being conducted by researchers from Queen's University Belfast and that any personal information I provide will be held securely on University premises and handled in compliance with data protection legislation.
4. I understand that fully anonymised data collected as part of this study may be looked at by authorised individuals from Queen's University Belfast. I give permission for these individuals to have access to this information.
5. I understand that the information I provide may be published, used as part of a dissertation, or presented at conferences. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained, and it will not be possible to identify me, or the intensive care unit for which I am providing service information, from any publications or presentations.
6. I agree to take part in the above study.

By clicking the 'Start survey' button below, you are consenting to participate in this study, as it is described in the Participant Information Sheet.

Chief Investigator

Dr Bronwen Connolly
Senior Lecturer, Critical Care
Wellcome-Wolfson Institute for Experimental Medicine
Queen's University Belfast
97 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 7BL
Email: b.connolly@qub.ac.uk
Tel: 028 9097 6047