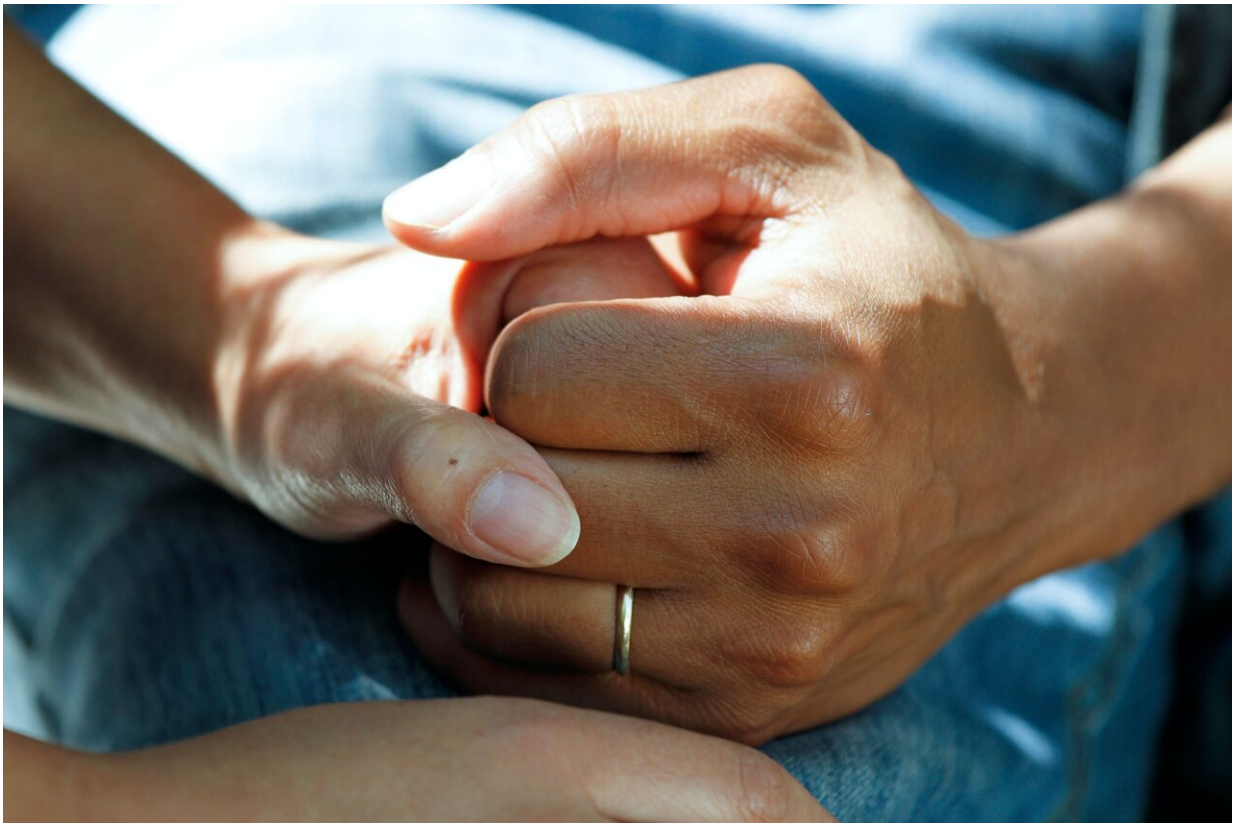


UK survey finds 65% of adults are worried about access to palliative care

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A survey commissioned by King's College London, and carried out by YouGov, has found that 65% of people across the U.K. are worried about access to palliative and end of life care, and 41% think there is too

little NHS resource allocated to palliative care.

The [survey](#) of 2,164 adults across the U.K. was commissioned by the Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery & Palliative Care at King's to explore people's knowledge and experiences of palliative and end of life care.

The data was released ahead of yesterday's debate by parliamentarians on assisted dying.

Findings from the [survey](#) conducted in January 2024 show that nearly a quarter of people (24%) across the U.K. say they don't know much about or have not heard of [palliative care](#), with disparities in knowledge between white and ethnic minority groups.

The survey found that 22% of people from ethnic minority groups say they have not heard of palliative care (compared to 4% of white people), and that 18% of people from ethnic minority groups believe it is accurate that palliative care involves giving people medicines in order to shorten their lives (compared to 5% of white people).

As MPs prepare to debate the topic of assisted dying, which is when someone terminally ill is prescribed life-ending drugs, experts say there is an urgent need to improve death literacy and understanding about palliative care among the public.

In the survey almost a third of people from ethnic minority groups (30%) said they do not trust health care professionals very much or at all to provide [high quality care](#) towards the end of life (compared to 17% of white people).

Professor Katherine Sleeman, from the Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery & Palliative Care at King's College London, said,

"The fact that 65% of U.K. adults say they are worried about access to palliative and end of life care should be a wake-up call for current and future governments. This is especially important given the large increase in palliative care need that is projected over the next decade.

"The shocking gap in the public's understanding of palliative and end of life care also needs to be addressed as the assisted dying debate gathers pace. It is highly concerning that many people believe that palliative care involves giving patients medicines in order to shorten their lives.

"Over 100,000 people in the U.K. die each year needing palliative care but do not receive it, and inequalities in accessing care, including among people from ethnic minority groups, are common. It is essential that we address the disparities that create additional barriers for people to access the care that they need. This includes an urgent need to improve death literacy among the public."

Dr. Sabrina Bajwah, clinical senior lecturer from the Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery & Palliative Care at King's College London said, "We already know that ethnic minority patients are more likely to experience distress at the end of life. It is concerning to note that nearly one-third of respondents from ethnic [minority](#) groups lack trust in health care professionals' ability to deliver high-quality [end-of-life care](#)."

"With our population becoming increasingly diverse, it is imperative that we promptly address this inequality by enhancing palliative care and end-of-life services to effectively cater to the unique needs of these patients and their families."

Provided by King's College London

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