with people with dementia.

The project outcomes are: an increase in referrals, more discussions around constipation, one of which was constipation.

The posters were offered out at various learning disability week events in Surrey and 'Project Poo' was then created by primary care nurses looking at raising awareness in 2016.

The service's acute liaison nurses started to record all constipation referrals into the patient database and undertake further investigations to determine if constipation was a causative factor in some cases where patients were admitted to hospital. A significant number of people were found to be presenting with symptoms of constipation due to medication overuse syndrome, with the risk of constipation, including antipsychotic use.

Laxatives do not cause the bowel to be lazy. So in addition to lifestyle changes, laxatives should be stopped. It is essential to keep others safe. Constipation is a problem for a significant number of people with learning disabilities and intellectual and multiple disabilities and 65% had been prescribed laxatives in the previous year, with 1.2% of people with learning disabilities having a constipation related admission to hospital, compared to 3% of people without learning disabilities.

Constipation is a health problem for 60% of people with profound intellectual disability and 35% with autism. It is more common in people with neurological and physical disabilities. There is a risk of a vicious cycle developing leading to hospital admissions or death, which prompted the team to take action.

Constipation caused Richard’s death. Richard was a 17-year-old boy with autism and ADHD who was unable to communicate well and was not able to follow any instructions.

Constipation can kill. And it is a condition which can affect up to half of all people who have learning disabilities. Constipation is often the reason for a hospital admission which could be avoided. Richard was admitted to hospital five times over the two years prior to his death. He was an inpatient for 27 days in the last admission. He died 21 days later.

The Learning Disability Programme, NHS England, has established a working group of experts by qualification, professional experience and life experience. They are working together to raise the issue of the risks constipation poses to people with a learning disability. The group includes representatives of local government, providers of learning disability services, advocacy organisations, voluntary organisations, and people with learning disabilities and their carers.

Two information sheets are currently being prepared. One aimed at carers and the other aimed at healthcare professionals. The intention is to develop a training module. The Learning Disability Programme, NHS England, has established a working group of experts by qualification, professional experience and life experience. They are working together to raise the issue of the risks constipation poses to people with a learning disability. The group includes representatives of local government, providers of learning disability services, advocacy organisations, voluntary organisations, and people with learning disabilities and their carers.

How can we answer the question about Richard’s death? Richard did not have a bowel obstruction or a physical disorder which was responsible for his death. His death was caused by constipation.

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