

# Implementing the Carer Support Needs Assessment Tool (CSNAT) in a Community Palliative Care Setting

Zoe Horseman<sup>2</sup>, Libby Milton<sup>1</sup>, Finucane A<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Marie Curie Hospice Edinburgh; <sup>2</sup>University of Edinburgh; Edinburgh, Scotland, UK.



Care and support through terminal illness

## Introduction

- The Carer Support Needs Assessment Tool (CSNAT) is a 16-item tool that provides a comprehensive measure of carer support needs for use in the community palliative care setting.<sup>(1)</sup> (Figure 1)
- Carers can use the CSNAT to identify the support they need to enable them to care for someone at home; or to support their own wellbeing within their caregiving role.<sup>(2)</sup>

Your support needs				
We would like to know what help you need to enable you to care for your relative or friend, and what support you need for yourself. For each statement, please tick the box that best represents your support needs at the moment.				
Do you need more support with...	No	A little more	Quite a bit more	Very much more
.. understanding your relative's illness				
.. having time for yourself in the day				
.. managing your relative's symptoms, including giving medicines				

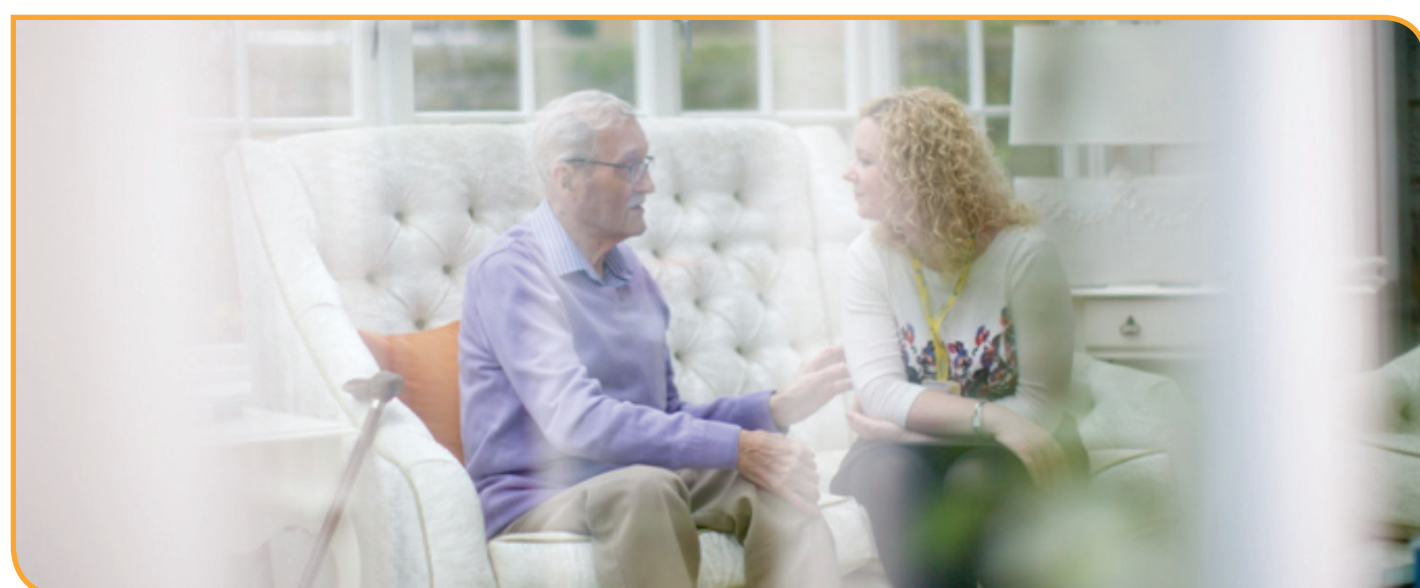
Figure 1: Sample items from the CSNAT.<sup>(1,2)</sup>

## Aims

To explore the perspectives of Community palliative care clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) on the implementation of the CSNAT in a community specialist palliative care service.

## Methods

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 palliative care CNSs from two specialist palliative care community nursing teams in Lothian, Scotland. Data was audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed using a framework approach.



## Results

- Approaches to administering the CSNAT were varied – some CNSs' left the tool with carers to complete alone, whilst others completed it with carers as part of a conversation.
- The CSNAT is often used once only; few participants mentioned review over time.
- Few CNSs generated formal carer support plans; supportive input was provided informally.
- The CSNAT was perceived to be effective in creating a space for conversations around carer support, which less experienced nurses found particularly helpful.

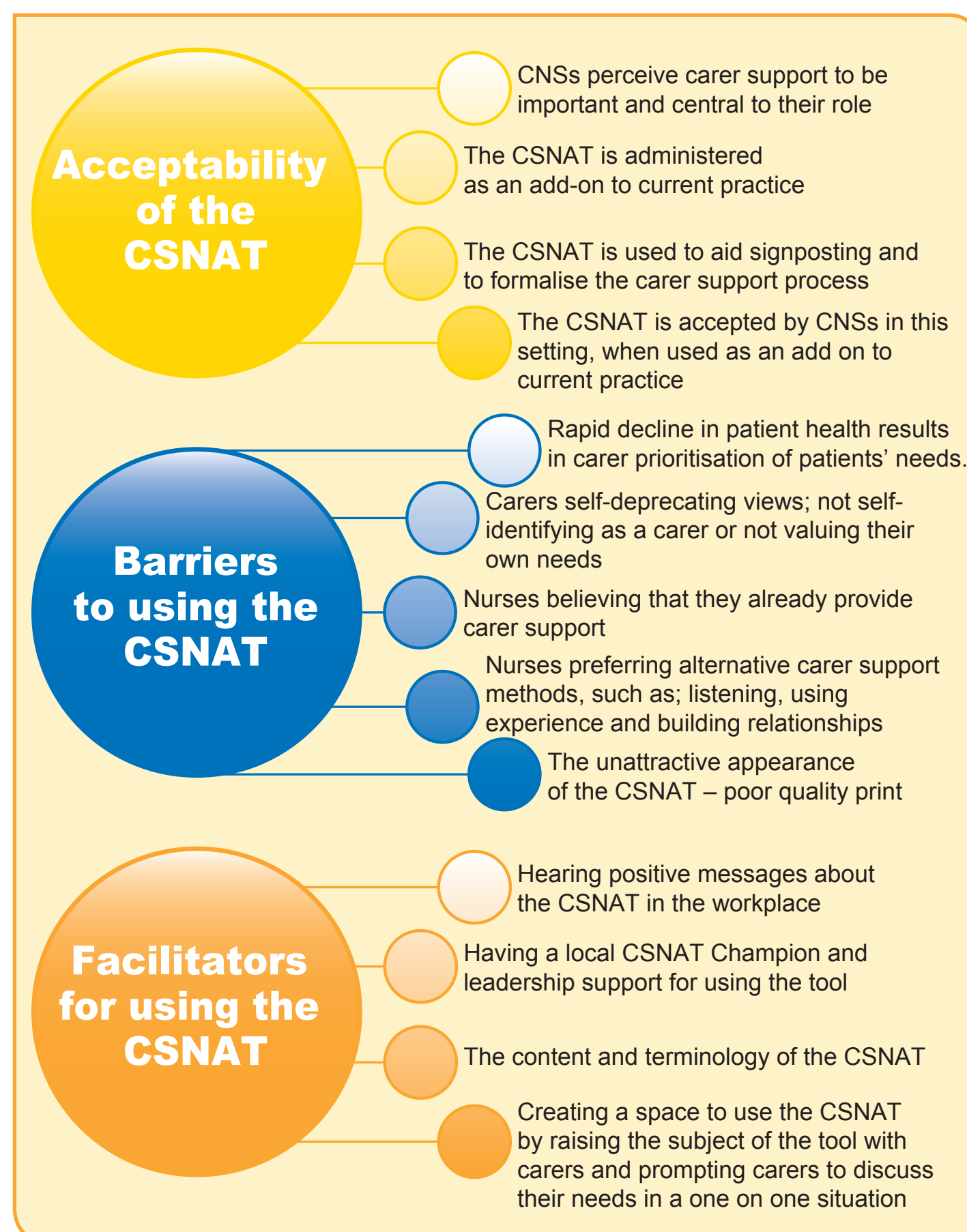


Figure 2: Acceptability of the CSNAT.

## Conclusions & Recommendations

- Carer support is viewed as an essential element of the CNS role, and the CSNAT, when used as an adjunct to existing practice, was deemed acceptable by CNSs.
- The healthcare professional is encouraged to introduce the CSNAT to support carers, recognising it will not always be completed or reviewed for different reasons.
- Education and training is recommended, particularly in relation to shared action plan and review phases.
- Early referral of patients for palliative care and early intervention using the CSNAT with carers.
- Identify a CSNAT Champion within the nursing team.
- Improve the appearance of the CSNAT.
- Validate carer support to help carers recognise their own needs.
- Further research on carer perspectives regarding the CSNAT is required.

### References:

- (1) EWING, G., & GRANDE (2012) Development of a Carer Support Needs Assessment Tool (CSNAT) for End-of-Life Care Practice at Home: A Qualitative Study. Palliative Medicine. 27 (3) 244-256.
- (2) CARER SUPPORT NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOOL (CSNAT) (2016) What is the Carer Support Needs Assessment Tool (CSNAT?). Available: <http://csnat.org>

For further information contact: Zoe Horseman: [zoehorseman@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:zoehorseman@hotmail.co.uk)

