

# Doctors refuse to let elderly die at home, watchdog finds

By Sarah Knapton

ELDERLY people who are dying are being admitted to hospital against their will and end-of-life care is not good enough, a Care Quality Commission study has found.

The national review of 40 clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) across England and Wales found that doctors are still refusing to accept that some elderly patients just want to die and are carrying on treatment regardless.

The CQC also found that patients felt they were “left out in the cold”, offered less information and fewer choices, if they were dying from a condition other than cancer.

More than four in 10 CCGs did not have an end-of-life care strategy at all, while a similar number had not considered the specialist needs of very elderly people, or those with dementia.

The review, published in Dying Matters Awareness Week, also found that many doctors and nurses were still uncomfortable talking about death with patients, and were confused about when end of life care should begin.

Charities warned that patients were being denied a “peaceful and dignified” end to their life and said health providers must “up their game”. David Behan, chief executive of the CQC said: “It is clear that the quality of care for some people at the end of their life is still not good enough.

“People with a diagnosis other than cancer, older people, people with dementia and people who may be vulnerable because of their circumstances do not always experience good care in the last phase of their life. We must ensure that no one is left behind.”