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# Mapping complexity in palliative care

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C-CHANGE

IMPROVING CARE BY MATCHING  
RESOURCES TO NEEDS

# Complexity in palliative care

- No standard definition of complexity in palliative care
- Limited research
- Not explored in UK context

## Aim

To explore and conceptualise complexity, to improve the delivery of palliative care

## Method

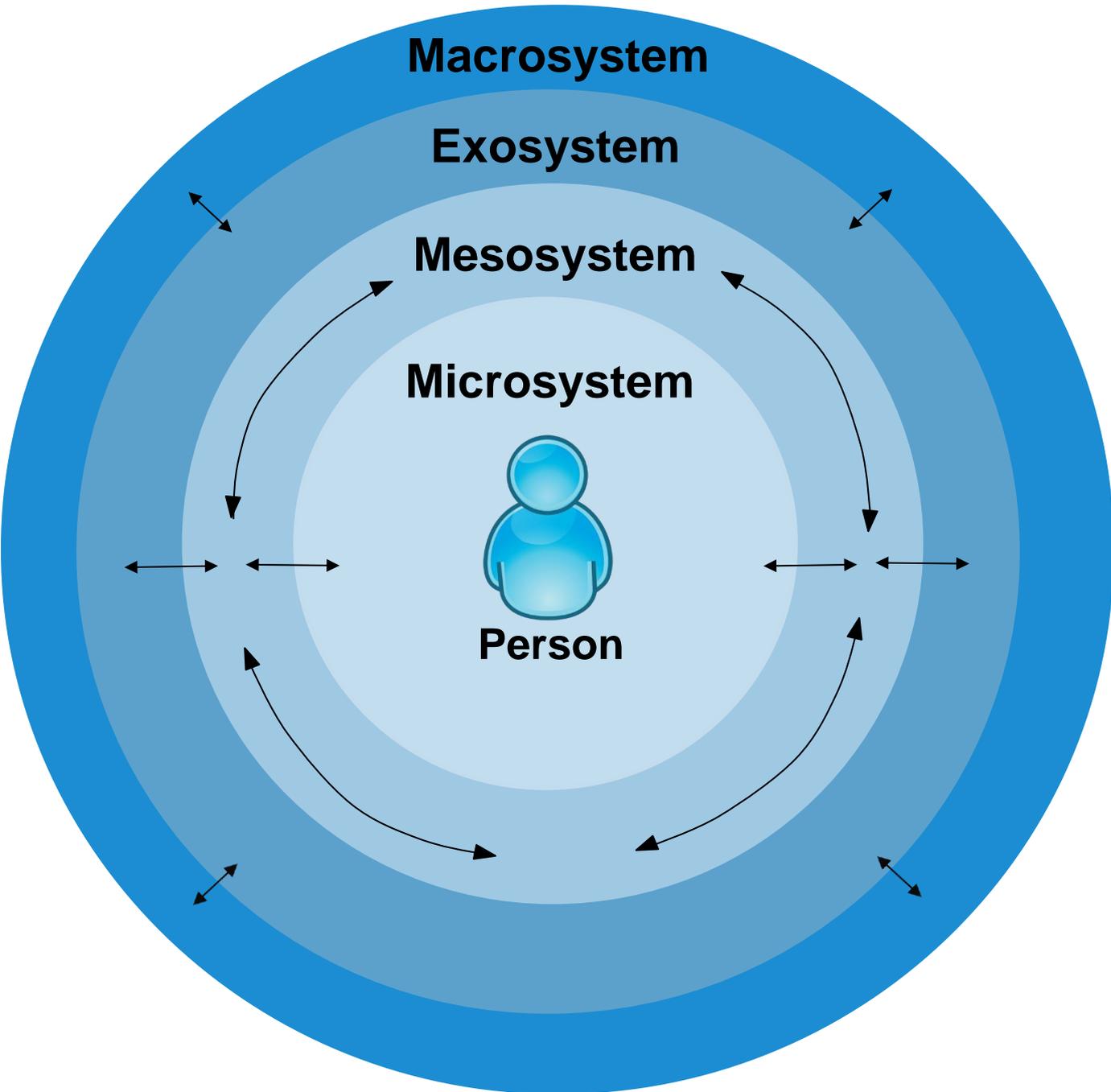
65 semi-structured interviews:

- 19 male/ 46 female
- Patient and families, clinicians, managers, national leads, and spiritual, social workers.

Interviews were analysed using Framework analysis.

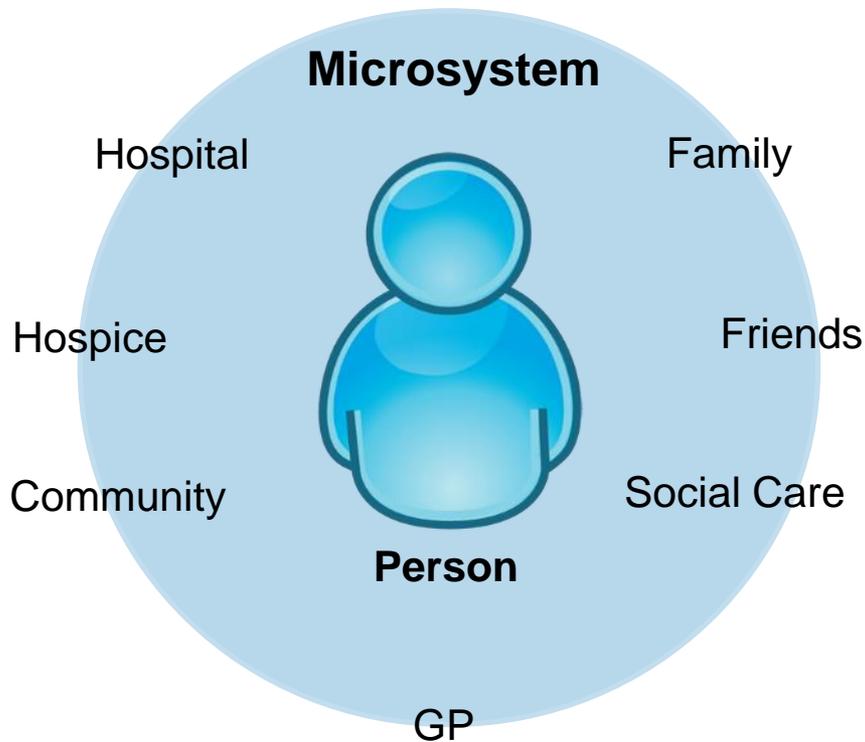


# Results



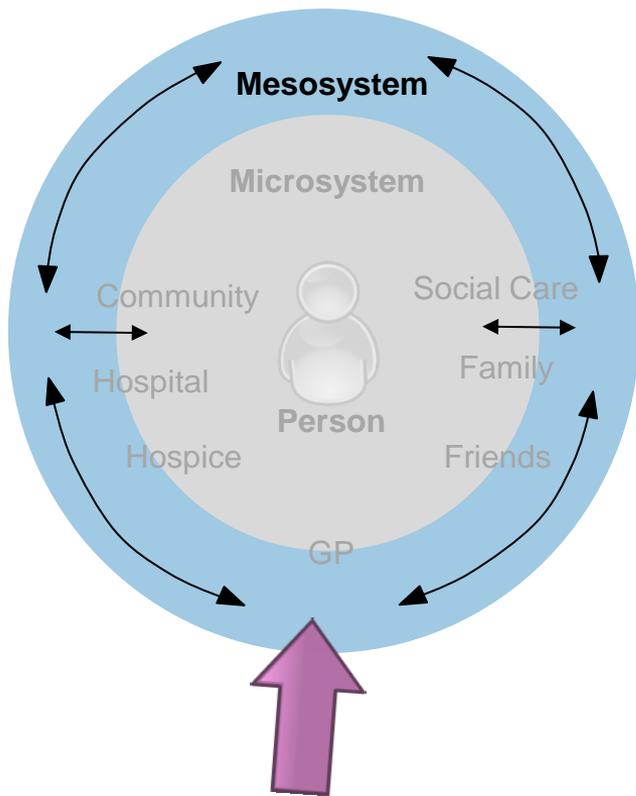
**Chronosystem**  
Changes in a persons needs over time

# The Microsystem: *The person, their family, health professionals and settings of care*



- 1. The person and their background**
- 2. The person's needs**
- 3. Personal characteristics**
- 4. Main people and settings of care**

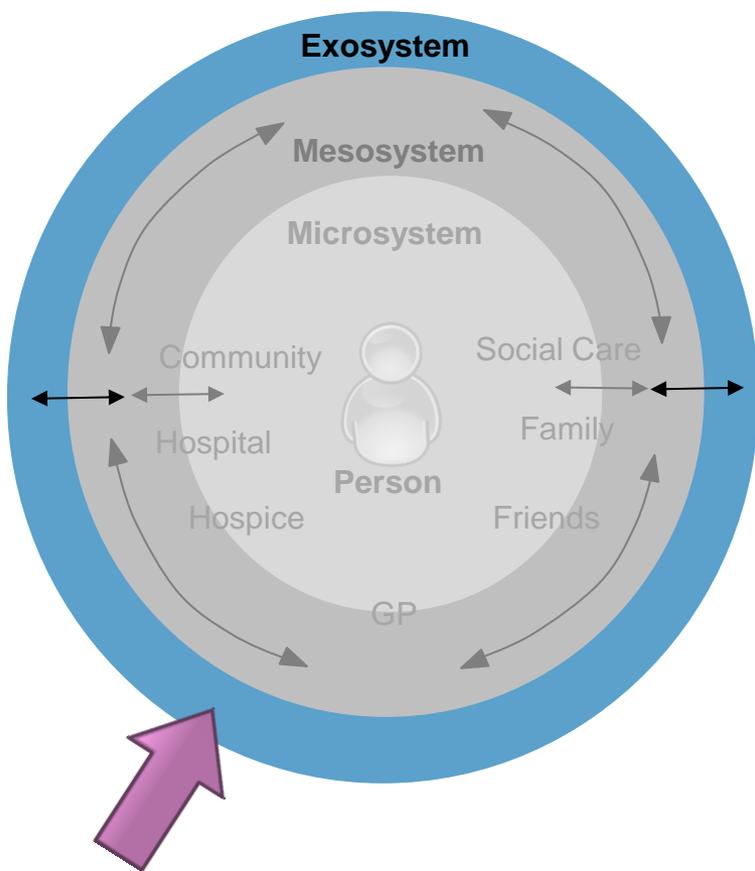
# The Mesosystem: *The interactions between the person, their family and health professionals*



*“...as a patient you may prefer one thing to be done. Meanwhile, as a professional you may actually think the other thing needs to be done first. So I mean, it will bring possible conflict.”*

(Patient)

# The Exosystem: *Service and system level factors*



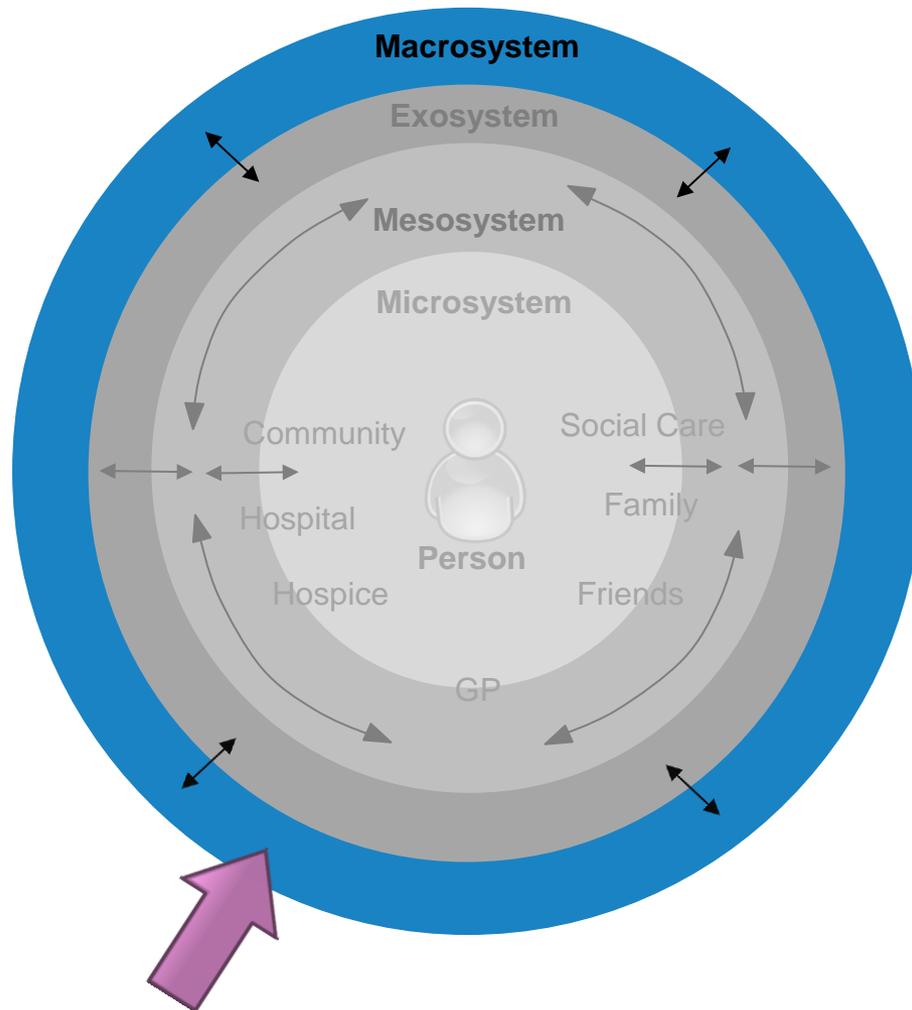
## **Multidisciplinary team meetings and coordination of care**

*“The whole purpose of having a multidisciplinary approach to palliative care is to handle complexity...No one profession has all the skills” (Clinician)*

## **Service availability and capacity**

*“...if you don't have the resources for them to access, then it doesn't matter that they're more complex, but you're still not going to meet the need.” (Manager)*

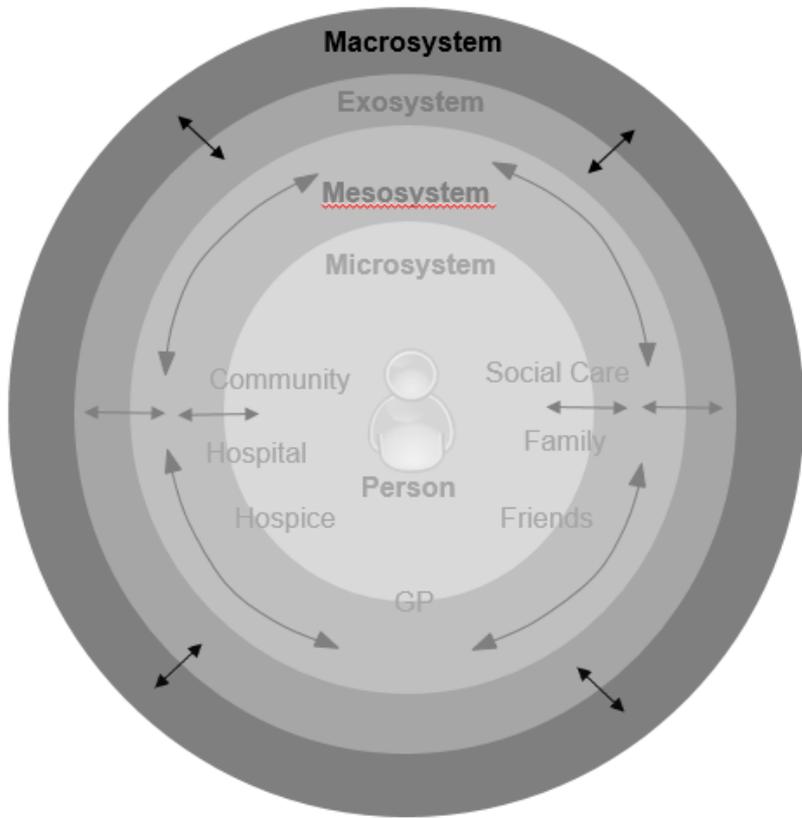
# The Macrosystem: *Wider societal context*



- **Inequity in palliative care provision**
- **Access to palliative care support**

*“...you see differences between cancer and non-cancer patients in the timing of their accessing palliative care. And there’s clearly evidence we’ve seen where non-cancer patients are entering the system at a later stage.” (National Lead)*

# Chronosystem: *Changing needs*

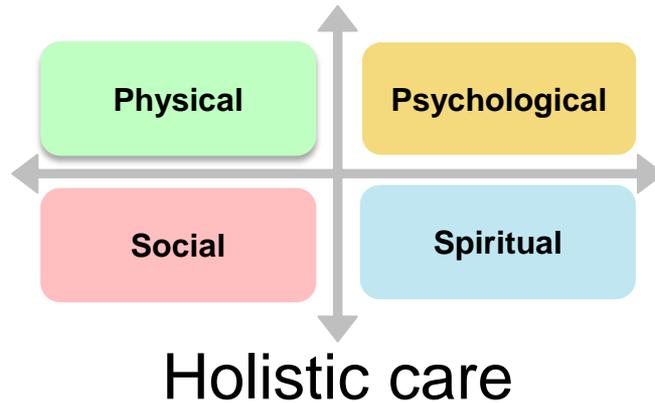


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Changes in a  
persons  
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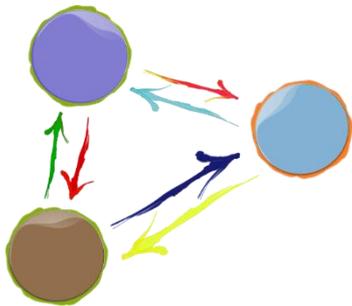


*“We’ve talked about the concept of complexity and how many dimensions there might be of it, but these are all dimensions that’ve also got time as a dimension added to them when it comes to working out what that means for the Health Service.” (National Lead)*

# Characteristics of complexity



Number and severity



Interactions



Systems and services



Societal



Time

# Strengths and limitations

- Good credibility and transferability but only conducted in a UK context.

## Conclusions

- To meet the increasingly complex needs of people, we need to consider all these aspects.
- Can determine where sources of complexity are coming from, and how we can improve the delivery of care.

# Acknowledgements

## Research Team

*Pinto C, van Vliet L, Bristowe K, Nicholson C, Bailey K, Evans C, Davies J M, George R, Guo P, Higginson I J, Daveson B A, Murtagh F E M.*

With many thanks to our Patient and Public Involvement Group and funder.

This article presents independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) under the Programme Grants for Applied Research scheme (RP-PG-1210-12015) and supported by the NIHR Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care South London at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NHS, the NIHR, MRC, CCF, NETSCC, the NIHR Programme Grants for Applied Research Programme, or the Department of Health.

C-CHANGE acknowledges the support of the National Institute of Health Research Clinical Research Network (NIHR CRN).

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