




**Compassion, caring, and
human-centred healthcare**



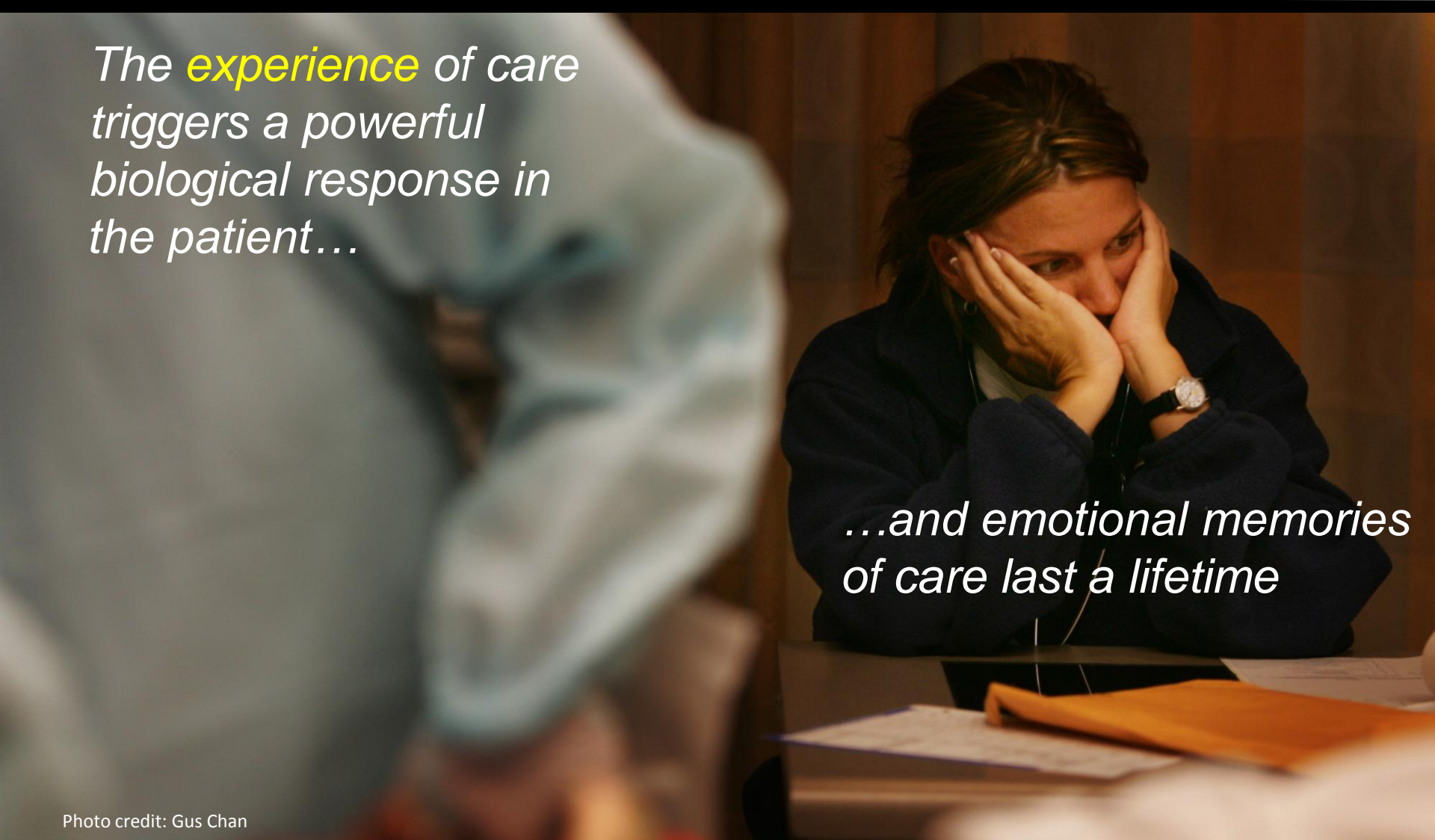
Why compassionate care is better for both patients and health professionals

**Dr Robin Youngson
CoFounder of Hearts in Healthcare**



COMPASSION: *The humane quality of understanding suffering and wanting to do something about it*

*The **experience** of care
triggers a powerful
biological response in
the patient...*



*...and emotional memories
of care last a lifetime*

Policy+

Policy plus evidence, issues and opinions in healthcare Issue 39 • May 2013

Does NHS staff wellbeing affect patient experience of care?

It may be reasonable to presume that patients receive better care from staff who feel happier in their work. However little is known about the strength or possible impact of associations between staff wellbeing and patient outcomes including their experiences of the care provided. Previous research has tended to focus on single aspects or one staff group [1,2], or have looked at associations at the whole hospital level (for example using the national staff and patient surveys, and hospital level outcomes [3,4]. Researchers in the NNRU have completed a study within the English NHS exploring the links between patients' experiences of health care and staff experiences at work such as staff motivation and wellbeing at work [5,6]. Staff and patient views were captured at the team/unit level – where possible matching staff to the individual patients they cared for to test associations between staff and patient experience [7].

KING'S
College
LONDON

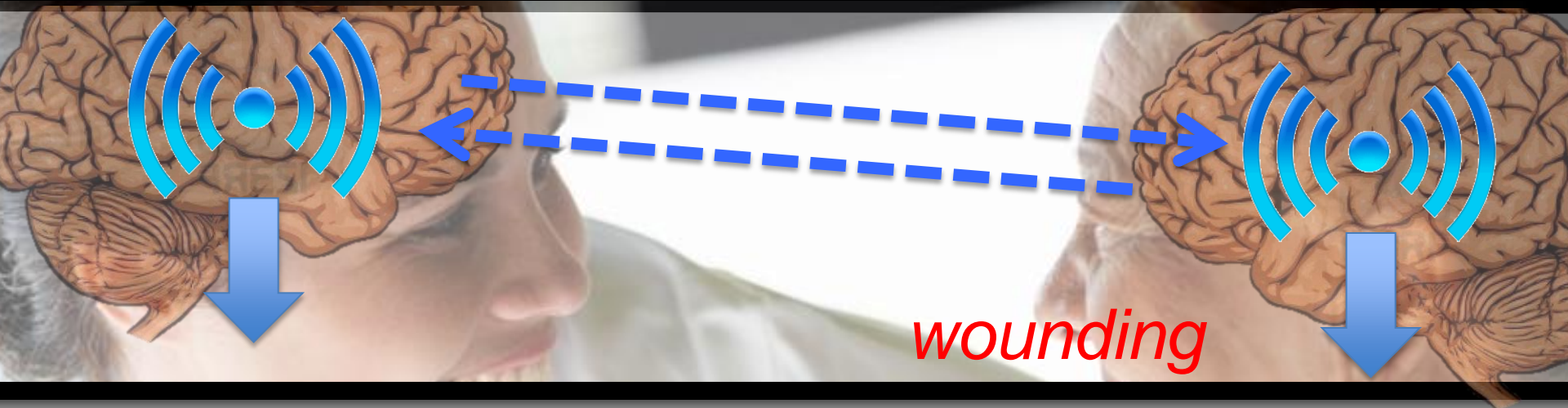
200 hours of
direct care
observation

Interviews with
100 patients, 86
staff, 55 managers

Surveys of 500
patients, 300 staff



*“Patients wanted prompt, **kind and compassionate care**. Their views of the **relational** care they received informed their judgement of whether the care was generally ‘**good**’ or ‘**bad**’, and whether individual staff were ‘good’ or ‘bad’ at their job.”*

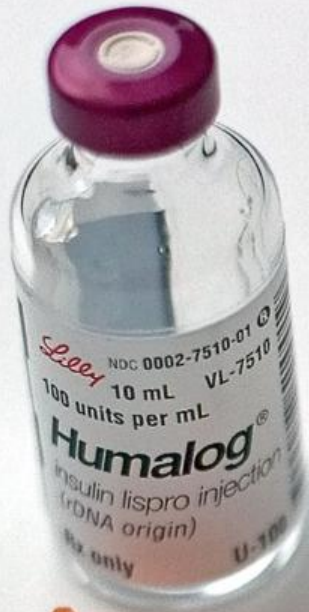


Cascading reactions in the ~~healing~~ response...

*wellness genes up-regulated
new protein synthesis
tissue healing
enhanced immunity
lowered blood pressure
positive emotions*

*cancer genes activated
stress hormones
tissue breakdown
compromised immunity
raised blood pressure
negative emotions*

Diabetic patients of high empathy
primary care physicians had 42%
fewer hospital admissions for
metabolic crisis than patients of low-
empathy physicians



*Randomised trial of
compassionate care for
homeless patients
presenting to ER -
30% reduction in repeat
visits in next month*



Compassionate, whole-person care in terminal lung cancer – early access to palliative care

- Fewer patients have depression, 16% vs 38%
- Fewer patients chose aggressive end of life care, 33% vs 54%
- Reduced overall cost of care
- But increased median survival, 11.6 months vs 8.9 months!



**Supportive pre-op visit by
anesthesiologist:**

- Halved the dose of post-op opiates



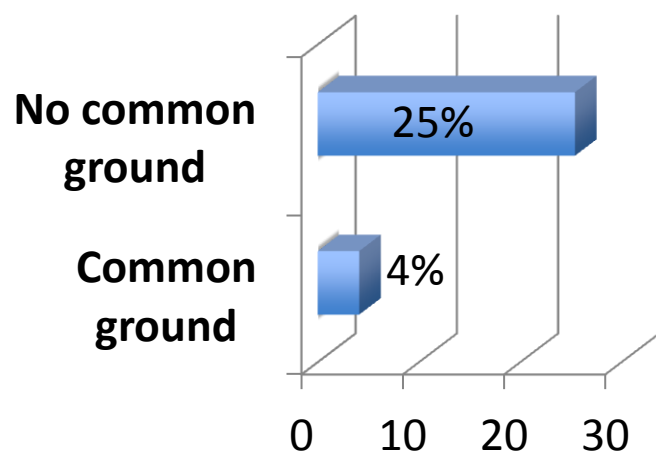
**Non-supportive pre-op visit by
anesthesiologist:**

- Length of stay 2.7 days longer

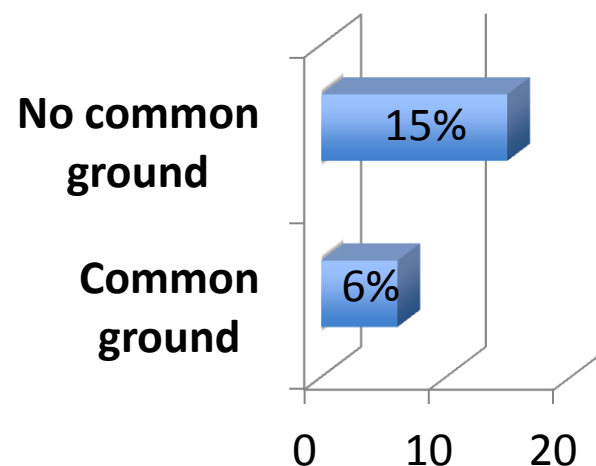
**Harvard study 1964: Randomised trial of supportive / non-supportive manner
in pre-op visit by anesthesiologist**

Dramatic reduction in healthcare utilisation as a result of finding common ground with patient, through compassionate, patient-centred primary care (Stewart 2000)

% Receiving diagnostic tests



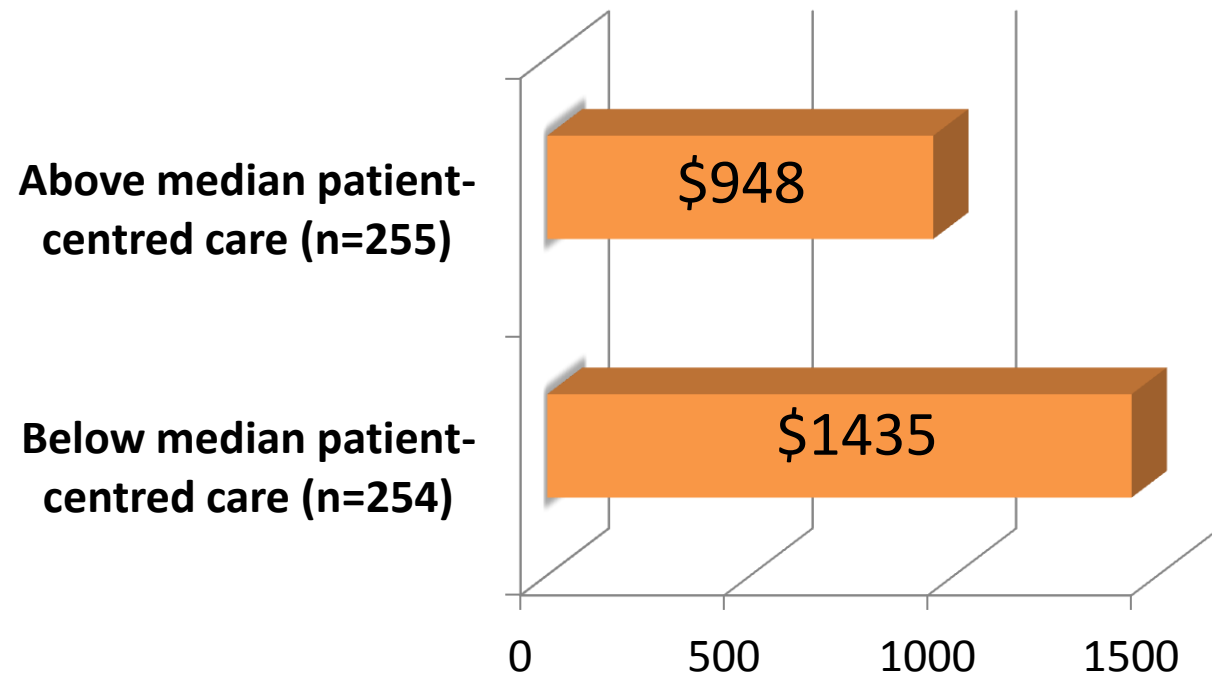
% Receiving specialist referral



Patients who found common ground with their doctor also had better recovery from their discomfort and concern, and better mental health 2 months later

The percentage of interactions in family and general internal medicine that are patient-centred predicts total cost of healthcare (Bertakis 2011)

Median annual cost of healthcare



The healing power of touch: - evidence from randomised controlled trials

- Reduced pain, reduced cortisol, enhanced immune function in post-op patients
- Reduced rate of complications and hospital length of stay in premature infants
- Reduced pain levels in multiple studies (meta analysis)
- Reduced fatigue and pain in cancer patients
- Increased haemoglobin levels in anaemic students





Compassion, caring, and
human-centred healthcare

A photograph of a male doctor with grey hair, wearing a white checkered shirt and a stethoscope, smiling and holding the hand of an elderly female patient with white hair. The patient is wearing a floral hospital gown and is also smiling. They are in a hospital room with a window in the background showing greenery.

*Compassionate caring is safer, more
effective, satisfies patients, saves time,
reduces demand, gives meaning to work,
and costs less*



*And the health professionals
who flourish in the broken
system are those who learn and
practice the daily habits of...*

- ♥ *kindness*
- ♥ *appreciation*
- ♥ *gratitude*
- ♥ *mindfulness*
- ♥ *self-compassion*
- ♥ *choosing to love
their work*



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Our true purpose is healing. Our joy is service.
And compassion lies at the heart of everything we do.

