Evaluation of Alzheimer’s Australia National Quality Dementia Care Initiative

National Quality Dementia Care Network (NQDCN) Projects

The specific objectives of the National Quality Dementia Care Initiative (NQDCI) are to:

- Achieve changes in policy and practice that improve the quality of dementia care in Australia
- Facilitate consumer involvement in dementia research and dementia research knowledge translation.

To address these objectives the NQDCI includes two components: the National Quality Dementia Care Network (NQDCN) and the Consumer Dementia Research Network (CDRN).

The evaluation of both the NQDCI ‘program’ and NQDCN projects will provide detailed information and commentary in relation to several process issues: such as incentives and barriers encountered, unintended consequences, what worked well etc. It will also be necessary to consider project impact and outcomes, for example, the degree to which the objectives of both the program and the individual projects were met and the extents to which achievements are sustainable. It is important that the lessons from the NQDCN projects are captured.

The NQDCI evaluation will use the Centre for Health Service Development (CHSD) evaluation framework, which considers impacts and outcomes across three levels – consumers, providers and the system; and asks the following six key questions: What did you do?; How did it go?; Can you keep it going?; What has been learnt?; Are your lessons useful for someone else?; and, Who did you tell?

Data to answer these questions will be generated from a mix of qualitative and quantitative sources, for example, project progress reports, project evaluations, stakeholder interviews, site visits, and capacity building and dissemination tools. Data elements and reporting tools will be finalised following the selection of individual projects and receipt of their detailed project proposals, which will include a project specific evaluation strategy.

The project specific evaluation strategy should address at a minimum each of the following levels and the corresponding evaluation questions, where applicable.

**Level 1: Processes, impacts and outcomes for consumers (carers, families, friends, communities)**
Objective: Improvements in dementia care.

*Evaluation questions:*
- Were projects implemented as intended with consumers?
- Has care improved?
- What has been the experience of consumer involvement in the project?
- Are there any unintended consequences for consumers arising from the program?

**Level 2: Processes, impacts and outcomes for providers (professionals, volunteers, organisations)**
Objective: Enhanced knowledge and skills of dementia care providers; increased use of evidence in everyday practice.
Evaluation questions:
- Were projects implemented as intended with providers?
- What learning and knowledge gaps hindered the use of evidence-based practice?
- Have the knowledge and skills of dementia care providers improved following implementation?
- How is evidence used in everyday practice?
- Has this changed since project implementation?
- Have dementia care providers been supported in accessing and using evidence-based practice?
- What capacity has been built as a result of the program?
- Are improvements sustainable?
- Are there any unintended consequences for providers arising from the program?

Level 3: Processes, impacts and outcomes for the system (structures and processes, networks, relationships)
Objective: Enhanced networks to improve dementia care; development of national clinical guides, resources and evidence-based interventions; and, dissemination of proven best practice in clinical care.

Evaluation questions:
- What linkages have developed between collaborators in projects?
- Have any improvement networks or communities of practice developed?
- What barriers or enablers to the sustained use of evidence-based practice can be identified?
- What needs to be done to make improvements sustainable?
- Are the health and aged care sectors receptive to the use of evidence?
- Have improvements in clinical care been widely disseminated?

There will be both a formative and summative focus to the evaluation:
- The formative aspects of the evaluation will inform the ongoing development and improvement of the projects. We call this evaluation for learning ("How can we learn and get better as we go?").
- The summative aspects of the evaluation seek to ascertain whether and to what extent the projects and broader QDCI program were implemented as intended and the anticipated results achieved. We call this evaluation for judgement ("How did we do?").

The evaluation will focus at both the ‘program’ and project level. At the project level the evaluation will include a review of within-project variation (for example, why the pace of implementation and the results achieved might vary in different projects and localities) and issues relevant to differing implementation strategies. A project reporting template will be provided to assist with this process.

The national evaluation team looks forward to working with the funded project leads to ensure the proposed project evaluation methods align with the overarching ‘program’ evaluation methodology.