



Care

Providing access to dementia-friendly eyecare in residential aged care

RESEARCH PROJECT BY
Dr Marianne Coleman

What is the focus of the research?

Developing a dementia-friendly eyecare pathway to improve vision care for people living with dementia in residential aged care. By ensuring better access to vision assessments and treatments, the study seeks to reduce preventable vision impairment.

Why is this important?

Seeing well matters to people living with dementia, so they can do activities they enjoy, such as reading, gardening or spending time with friends and family. Poor eyesight makes living with dementia harder, increases risk of falls, confusion and reduces independence. It is important that people with dementia can access eyecare anywhere.

However, people with dementia in residential aged care can miss out on regular eye tests or timely treatment for eye problems. They may have difficulty seeing well with routine eyecare often being overlooked, yet even simply updating glasses can improve eyesight. Creating a structured pathway ensures that eyecare needs for people living with dementia are seen, understood and met by everyone providing care and support.

Dr Coleman wants to make sure everyone can have good eyecare in residential aged care. It's not just about getting an eye test, it's about eye health, eye comfort, and knowing how well someone can see. There are many different people involved in dementia care and support, who might need to know about a person's eyesight and eye conditions to deliver the best care. Dr Coleman will work with everyone involved in care management to create a dementia eyecare pathway that's fit for purpose and easy to use.

Who's undertaking the research?



DR MARIANNE COLEMAN
Monash University

Dr Marianne Coleman is an orthoptist and research fellow at the National Centre for Healthy Ageing, a joint initiative between Monash University and Peninsula Health. Dr Coleman also provides clinical education to eyecare students at La Trobe University Eye Clinic. Marianne's research focuses on helping people living with dementia access high quality, person-centered eyecare. She is interested in health services research. Marianne supports a large research project about the right to rehabilitation for people living with dementia.

The title of Dr Coleman's project is Designing a Dementia-Friendly Eyecare Pathway to Help People with Dementia "See Well, to Live Well" in Residential Aged Care. Marianne developed the project with people with lived experience of dementia.

With the support of the Dementia Australia Research Foundation, Dr Coleman has received the coveted Henry Brodaty Mid-Career Research Fellowship and Dementia Advocates Award.

How will it happen?

STAGE 1

Gather information to co-design a dementia eyecare pathway using an established implementation framework

The pathway will be informed by a case study in a residential aged care facility, to find out how eye care happens in aged care now. Dr Coleman will also review the literature to identify eye care models and guidelines.

STAGE 2

Integrate information to make an implementation plan

Findings will be presented to an expert reference group (eye and dementia care professionals) and a project advisory group (people with lived experience of dementia) to design a draft pathway and plan how to embed it. Two consultation rounds will be done with the public and other stakeholders to improve the plan.

STAGE 3

Build on previous work in dementia-friendly eyecare

A training course about dementia-friendly eyecare for optometrists will be improved with videos, new training for optometry practice staff created, and eye test information for people with dementia shared outside Australia.

What would the future look like for people living with dementia in residential aged care?

- + Each person receives regular eye tests to monitor vision and identify eyecare needs.
- + Information about eyecare needs and how well a person can see is easy to find, and understandable by everyone involved in their care.
- + Information about eyecare needs and how well someone can see is integrated into routine care and support.