



Care

Providing access to cognitive interventions in regional areas to improve memory

RESEARCH PROJECT BY
Associate Professor Kerry Pike

What is the focus of the research?

Supporting and training healthcare professionals in regional memory clinics to expand access to, and routinely deliver, cognitive interventions to older adults at risk of developing dementia.

Why is this important?

There has been plenty of research showing that cognitive interventions, such as a memory management group, can help improve everyday memory and thinking, and that older adults with subjective cognitive decline and mild cognitive impairment would like to access these interventions. Unfortunately, these interventions can only be accessed in research studies and are not routinely available at local memory clinics.

Associate Professor Pike previously led the development of a training program for clinicians at metropolitan memory clinics, which resulted in cognitive interventions becoming

available. Participating in cognitive intervention led to increased knowledge about cognitive impairment and dementia. In addition, it resulted in improved confidence, knowledge and use of cognitive strategies, enhanced mood and anxiety management, and better relationships and overall well-being of older adults at risk of developing dementia.

People in regional and rural areas face significant health disparities, including limited access to health care, compared with urban dwellers. In this study, Dr Pike will work with older adults with subjective cognitive decline and mild cognitive impairment, along with healthcare professionals, to adapt and expand this training to regional memory clinics in Ballarat, Bendigo and Cairns. Her goal is to help provide equitable care access to those at risk of dementia.

What are cognitive interventions?

Cognitive interventions refer to various ways of supporting everyday memory and thinking, for example, attending a group about ways to manage memory in everyday life.

Who's undertaking the research?



**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
KERRY PIKE**

Griffith University

Dr Pike is a clinical neuropsychologist and associate professor in the School of Applied Psychology and Centre for Mental Health at Griffith University, where she leads the Maximising and Characterising Cognition in Everyday Life research group. She also chairs the Australian Dementia Network Cognitive Interventions Working Group, and the International Neuropsychological Society (INS) Neuropsychological Interventions Special Interest Group. Her research is focused on interventions to improve cognition and mitigate any impacts in everyday life. Associate Professor Pike is particularly interested in increasing access to evidence-based neuropsychological interventions in routine clinical practice.

Her project is titled *Providing access to cognitive interventions in regional memory clinics: adaptation and implementation of a clinician training package*.

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How will it happen?

STAGE 1

Initial survey to assess the needs and priorities of regional memory clinics, clinicians and patients, as well as key perceived barriers and enablers to the implementation of cognitive interventions in regional areas.

STAGE 2

Adaptation of the clinician training package to meet the needs and priorities of regional memory clinics, whilst overcoming identified barriers.

STAGE 3

Provide clinicians working in regional memory clinics with customised training in the delivery of a suite of cognitive interventions through a combination of online modules, an interactive in-person workshop, and professional peer support

STAGE 4

Explore how clinician training changes the number of people receiving cognitive interventions through clinics in Ballarat, Bendigo, and Cairns, and the benefits this has for people attending those clinics.

What will it mean for regional communities?

- + Cognitive interventions will be available at local memory clinics.
- + Improved knowledge and use of cognitive strategies, better mood management and enhanced overall wellbeing.
- + Improved healthcare services for people living in rural and regional Australia.