

From strength to strength: Volunteers supporting dementia and delirium care in rural hospitals

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Southern NSW LHD Aged Care Evaluation Unit



The beginning



- Pilot project implemented at Bega hospital in 2009 in partnership with Alzheimer's NSW. This program continues
- Results of pilot
 - Trend towards a reduction in falls
 - Volunteers - greater confidence in care post program $f(1.5, 22.9)=11.78, p=.001$ and increased positive PCC attitudes post program $f(1.4, 19.6)=13.54, p=.001$
 - High acceptability by nursing staff and volunteers with perceptions of improved safety and quality of care for patients
 - Anecdotal evidence of support for family carers



What the Volunteers do



Person centred care emotional security and support

- Finding out about the person – personal profile
- One to one emotional care & supporting interaction with others
- Touch through massage
- Engagement in therapeutic/enjoyable activities

Practical assistance and reducing delirium risk

- Assisting with and promoting eating and drinking
- Walking with patients
- Assisting with vision and hearing aids
- Supporting orientation



Program growth



- Model included in NSW Dementia Services Framework 2010-2015
- 2014 – NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) under the Care of Confused Hospitalised Older Person Program (CHOPs) funded the development of a training and implementation package to support further roll out in NSW - Now a web based resource with national and international interest



- Highlighted on ACSQHC Caring for Cognitive Impairment Campaign



From strength to strength



- Department of Health grant 2015 - 2017 to implement and evaluate in seven Southern NSW LHD acute facilities
- 4 project officers employed
- Aimed to establish a stronger evidence base to support investment in volunteer patient care models
- NHMRC Cognitive Decline Partnership Centre (CDPC) activity 2016



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Project outcomes

- Successful implementation in all sites
- 590 patients received volunteers support
- 109 volunteers recruited and trained
- 94% volunteer retention at 6 months
- High acceptability by managers, staff and volunteers
- Skill and capacity building of project officers
- Sustainability planning



Preliminary patient outcomes

- Intervention group n=253; control n=127
- Mean age: 82 years intervention (83 control)
- Readmission rate: 6.3% intervention (11% control)
($p=.065$)
- Less patients specialised in intervention group
4.7% for intervention & 22.4% for control ($p=.000$)
- No difference in falls



Family carer feedback



- 92% rated the program as helping “a lot”.
- Some key themes:
 - A sense of relief that someone was able to sit with the patient when they were unable to
 - Help with nutrition, hydration and allaying confusion
 - Small periods of respite from often lengthy family vigils with disoriented and frightened patients.



- *'I live out of town and Mum was used to having someone with her because she lived with us. They helped feed her because she couldn't do that at the time. For me, knowing someone was there ... I can't even tell you what a benefit that was'*
- *Mum loved to see them [the volunteers]. We're away from [town] so we can't see her all the time and the extra people helped. It was peace of mind for my brother and I.*
- *'It should be everywhere'*



Where to from here

- Sustainability support
- Complete analysis & write up



Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts (Winston Churchill)



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The volunteers perspective with Frances Wilmore

