



# Newsletter

Issue: No. 8 Autumn 2003

## Introduction:

Welcome to this our Autumn edition of the DSIDC newsletter. While the traditional holiday months of July and August have in the past allowed us time to recharge the batteries, this summer has been somewhat different and hectic with the appointment of two new full time staff members, several workshops/training days delivered around the country, and the Centre's participation in the AAATE scientific meeting in UCD, and the hosting of the ENABLE project meeting in Dublin attended by 15 European delegates. Since August, a new research study examining the issue of dementia screening and diagnosis amongst GP's has commenced, in collaboration with the Irish College of General Practitioners. This study aims to identify the obstacles involved in the recognition of dementia by GP's in the community. In early September the Centre also saw the official launch in Trinity College of its new training Video/DVD, "Understanding Dementia". The launch was attended by Minister Ivor Callaly and other representatives from each of the key professional bodies across the country. This work was a direct response to service providers requests for a training video of this kind. There has been a dearth of training/education materials available in Ireland about dementia and this locally made production uses case vignettes along with three dimensional graphic brain imagery to explain the causes behind the symptoms and behaviours characteristic of dementia. For those interested a purchase order form is now available on our website.



Pictured back left to right - Jonathan McEvoy, Mary Drury, Robert Coen. Front seated Suzanne Cahill and Minister Ivor Callaly.

For me a particular highlight over the last period has been the welcome visit by both myself, Janet Convery and Brenda Hannon (ERHA) last month to Seven Oaks a dementia-specific residential facility in Derry.

The Centre had some years ago being involved in providing consultancy advice to Kieran Dempsey – the architect who designed this wonderful building. At that stage only preliminary drawings were in place and much discussion ensued about features of “dementia-friendly” design which should be incorporated. So it was all the more gratifying to visit the establishment recently and observe its many excellent aspects of best practice now in evidence. Seven Oaks is the outcome of a collaborative and visionary partnership between the Fold Housing Association and the Foyle Health and Social Services Trust. The facility is located in a quiet cul-de-sac in a small privately owned housing development. It offers three levels of accommodation and has very deservedly won the 2003 UK Care Homes Award. I was particularly struck by the way in which the design uses natural lighting and signage throughout; corridors simulate local familiar Derry streets, colour-coding is cleverly used to aid orientation, technology is ethical and discrete, family involvement is very much welcomed, and overall an atmosphere of utter peacefulness, diversity, support and fun prevails.

Finally as mentioned above the Centre has had two new staff members, Matthew Gibb and Maeve Clarke join us since late summer. Matthew has been appointed as Senior Social Worker/Research Officer to the Memory Clinic, at St. James's Hospital and is the link person between DSIDC and the Mercers Institute for Research on Ageing. He comes with much experience in the area of physical and sensory disability. Maeve is a new Research Assistant. She has a primary degree in Psychology and is working on the GP project. Both Matthew and Maeve are very welcome.

S. Cahill,  
Director.

## Education & Training News:

Since our last newsletter we have also had a new addition to the Education Team at DSIDC. The Centre warmly welcomes Sarah Marsh, who took up the post as Assistant Education Officer in May and has already co-facilitated workshops in Wicklow and Mayo and Extra Mural classes. Sarah comes with much practice experience in dementia and previously worked with the Alzheimer Society of Ireland as their Dementia Specific Case Manager.

The Centre continues to receive requests for training from service providers, planners and administrators around the country. Between September and December a total of 12 workshops have been booked and several other invitations have been received for journal clubs, study days and National Conference input. Due to the continued success and demand for Extra Mural courses, these classes have re-commenced since Sept 8th. If you have missed out on this term, Extra Mural classes commence again, in January 2004. Next year's places are currently being reserved if you are interested contact us on 01 4162035.

### ***Forthcoming Conferences/Events for your Diary:***

#### ***'Quality Standards in Dementia Care' 5/12/2003***

This national conference due to take place at the Gresham Royal Marine Hotel Dun Laoghaire on December 5th and co-hosted by the DSIDC, ASI and the NCAOP aims to provide practitioners with an up-to-date overview on best practice in the acute, community and residential care sectors. The conference is designed to showcase services at the cutting edge, to highlight new directions in dementia care and to stimulate debate, discussion and networking. Speakers will include Professor Brian Lawlor, (Dublin), Dr. Wilhelmena Hoffman (Stockholm), Professor Murna Downs (Bradford), and Dr. Eamon O'Shea (Galway). The conference will appeal to service providers, policy makers, planners, researchers and administrators throughout the country keen to find out what is new in dementia care in terms of quality standards. The afternoon workshops will include sessions addressing the topic of more advanced dementia, the occupational needs of those in residential care and will link theories and findings from palliative care to best practice and later stage dementia care. For further information, please log on to the Centre's website.

#### ***Study Day on Dementia.***

William Stokes Ward, The Adelaide, Meath and National Children's Hospital, Tallaght. 8th November, 2003. Contact Sean O'Brien on 4142000.

#### ***The 2003 Healthy Ageing Conference,***

Burlington Hotel, Dublin. 25th November.

The National Council on Ageing and Older People. The main aim of this Conference is to launch the National Council on Ageing and Older Peoples', "Healthy Ageing database". The Conference also aims to present the Council's report on Health Promotion initiatives for older people in Ireland. For more information contact: conferences@ncaop.ie

### ***Research:***

Irish Evaluation Study of the ENABLE project.

As you are by now aware, ENABLE has been on-going since June 2001 and recruitment for the project was completed in June 2003 with 32 Irish families taking part. This year Lithuania (a new EU Country) joined the consortium and each country is responsible for its own sample recruitment. There has been much interest in the ENABLE devices, and the project has clearly highlighted the usefulness and availability of enabling technologies in this country. Data collection for the project has been on-going over the past 15 months and analysis is now in progress.. Early results are positive and demonstrate how both family caregivers and persons with dementia find the products useful. Other preliminary findings suggest that the self-reported quality of life of people with dementia appears to be more positive than caregivers expect and many of the products being trialled also have direct application to family caregivers.

### ***Publications of interest:***

*The Effects of Education and AD Pathology.*  
Neurology (June 24, 2003. 1909-1915).

According to new findings from the Religious Orders Study undertaken by researchers at St. Luke's Medical Centre in Chicago, important new evidence suggests that formal education may provide a cognitive "reserve" that can reduce the effect of AD brain abnormalities on cognitive functioning in later life. More than 900 Catholic clergy from 40 groups across the U.S. were part of the Religious Orders Study.

#### ***"The Ones Who Can't Complain":***

*Lessons Learned About Discomfort and Dementia.*  
Alzheimer's Care Quarterly. (January-March 2003. 41-49).

Assessing and treating pain and discomfort in people who can no longer report on their internal states is quite challenging. This article reports one person's professional journey in trying to understand the needs of people with dementia who experienced pain. In addition, the paper details a clinical tool, the Assessment of Discomfort in Dementia (ADD) protocol used as a systematic method for improving recognition and treatment of discomfort in clinical practice.

#### ***The Role and Benefits of Activities for People with Dementia in Nursing Homes in Ireland.***

This thesis was recently completed by Avril Dooley a Trinity College student on placement with DSIDC since April of this year. The work examines the types and frequency of recreational and therapeutic activities available to people with dementia resident in Irish Nursing Homes.



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