



DEMENTIA SERVICES INFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
promoting excellence in dementia care

Newsletter

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Introduction:

Welcome to this the fourth edition of our Newsletter. Since the time we last went to press, DSIDC has continued to expand and the Centre is now firmly consolidated with full Department of Health operational status. Since April two full time staff members, Anne Timoney, (Research Officer) and Jo Loney, (Care Organiser) have joined the Centre. Anne is employed to co-ordinate the HRB/ASI funded project on nursing home design and dementia and Jo is working on the In Home Respite Project, a collaborative piece of work being undertaken with the Eastern Regional Health Authority. Our education and training programme also continues to grow. Since January workshops have been held in Drogheda, Limerick, Portlaoise and Donegal. Further training is now being organised for staff in both the Western and Mid Western Health Boards. A particularly new aspect of service development has been that of the Centre moving into the area of providing seminars to General Practitioners. Four GP seminars with a focus on diagnosis have recently been held.

The Centre's first EU funded project "Partners in Care" is now complete and a new training kit for service providers and family caregivers, consisting of both video and manual is available in our library. This work will be of particular interest to those working in residential settings as it provides a particularly useful exploration of the dilemmas facing service providers and family carers when a relative with dementia enters a nursing home. Another exciting highlight has been the recent launching in Norway of the new European Project 'Enable'. The project brings together four European countries, Norway, Ireland, Finland and the UK to explore the potential assistive technology has to help people with dementia live more independently. The summer period will continue to keep us busy with planned visits from several overseas visitors along with more local colleagues, fieldwork for the nursing home project about to commence, new workshops to be delivered, new appointments to be made and further conference participation and planning. We thank you for your support over the last quarter and very much welcome your thoughts and views on items of relevance including how this newsletter could be better tailored to your own needs.

In Home Respite Support Project

This new project is a three way initiative between the South Western Area Health Board, DSIDC and The Medical Social Work Department at St. James's Hospital and is overseen and financed by ERHA as part of its "Home First Initiative". A great deal of support has been afforded us by (i) Alistair Graham, of ERHA, (ii) Paula Lawler, Director of Services for Older People and (iii) Marie Faughey, Director of Nursing. Eileen Quinn and her team at St. James' have also been instrumental in making it all happen by identifying suitable families to participate in the new service being trialled. The project offers "In-home Respite Care Service" to 6 family caregivers of persons with dementia (moderate to advanced) who continue to live in community. The person with dementia is offered an opportunity to spend time with a trained respite support worker who has a specialist knowledge of the level of disability and a genuine interest and commitment to offering this new service. Four Respite Support Workers, Joe Cluxton, Helen Coleman, Marie Hennessy, and Patricia Murray and a Care Organiser Jo Loney were selected to join the project and are currently attending a Dementia Care education programme at DSIDC. Their commitment to and enthusiasm for, the new service is quite phenomenal and all of us involved share a strong belief that the project will be successful in forming the basis of a new service, so vital to the needs of people with dementia and their primary caregivers. The new service is now well underway with families currently being offered 6 hours respite care weekly.

Forthcoming Conferences

1. International Symposium on Cultural Gerontology
Sweden "Cultural Context of Ageing". June 9th - 12th
2. 5th International Care/Case Management Conference
Vancouver, "Care/Case Management: Who Needs It ?
June 28th - July 1st.
3. World Gerontological Congress Vancouver,
July 1st - 5th
4. International Conference on Technology and Ageing.
Canada. September 12th - 14th
5. Dementia Care 2001, September 26th & 27th The Royal
Marine Hotel Dun Laoghaire, Dublin.

6. Irish Gerontological Society Annual Conference
October 5th & 6th. Killiney Court Hotel, Dublin.

Meeting The Need For Training: The Challenge For Administrators

The Centre recently facilitated an information seminar which addressed the issues faced by administrators and directors of nursing in planning for staff training in dementia care. Participants were introduced to the education and training philosophy at DSIDC and the programme addressed the question of how to facilitate staff in their desire to introduce change in their work environment following dementia training. In addition the topic of cultures of care and the dilemmas posed for administrators as they try to meet both the needs of their staff and their clients were reviewed. Given the range of care settings involved, the seminar afforded everybody an opportunity to share experiences and network. Participant feedback was very positive and the discussions, that ensued were most stimulating. A further seminar is now being planned for the autumn.



Library & Information Service

Our library service continues to expand. We now have on our library shelves, two years bound copies of 27 Journals varying in content from *Neurology* to *The Journal of Dementia Care*. These journals cover both the clinical policy, practice and more multi disciplinary aspects of dementia care. On-line access has increased greatly over the past year with the introduction of several additional journals such as *Ageing & Mental Health*, *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* and *Journal of Intellectual Disability* in electronic format. Requests for advice through our information and consultancy service are also on the increase with a huge interest in design issues from

Health Boards and from individual practitioners. Interest in the range and use of alternative therapies and interventions to help people with dementia enjoy a better quality of life is the second most sought after area of inquiry.

Whats new from the research literature?

Some of these new 2001 publications may interest you and can be sourced from DSIDC's library.

Sullivan-Marx, E. (2001). Achieving restraint-free care of acutely confused older adults. *Gerontological Nursing*, 27, 4 56-61.

This article reports findings from a descriptive study of clinically restrained hospital patients with dementia and discusses approaches to achieving restraint free patient care. An individualised approach to care based on a comprehensive needs assessment is recommended.

Perks, A. Nolan, M. Ryan, T. Enderby, P. Hemmings, I. and Robinson, K. (2001). Breaking the mould: Developing a new service for people with dementia and their carers, *Quality in Ageing*, 2.1: 3-11

The authors describe the rationale and philosophy behind a new British respite service for people with dementia living in the community

Mitchell, S. Tetroe, J. and O'Connor, A. (2001). A decision aid for long term tube feeding in cognitively impaired older persons. *American Geriatrics Society*, 49: 313-316.

The article will be of interest to those practitioners confronting ethical dilemmas in daily practice. It reports on the development and evaluation of a decision support tool, to assist practitioners facing the dilemma of whether to initiate long term tube feeding in a cognitively impaired person 65 years and older.

Stokes, G. (2001). Difficult decisions : What are a person's best interests? *The Journal of Dementia Care*, 9.3: 25-27.

While much dementia care practice is based on assumptions about the person's best interests, the author here argues that best interests are often difficult to determine. The article acknowledges that care plans need to be based on agreed principles which are not only ethical but also easily understood and delivered.

Ballard, C. O'Brien, J. Morris, M. Barber, R. Swann, A. Neill, D. and Mc Keith, I. (2001). The progression of cognitive impairment in dementia with Lewy bodies(D.L.S.), Vascular Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 16; 499-503.

The paper reports on rates of progression of cognitive impairment amongst a sample of 227 UK based people experiencing mild to moderate dementia. Findings challenge earlier research results and show that persons with D.L.B. A.D. and Vasc. D. have a similar rate of cognitive decline over a one year follow up period. The annual decline for all three types of dementia was 4 to 5 points on the MMSE and 12 to 14 points on the Camcog.



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