



DEMENTIA SERVICES INFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
promoting excellence in dementia care

Newsletter

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DEMENTIA SERVICES INFORMATION & DEVELOPMENT CENTRE NEWSLETTER

Irish Regional Health Authorities

Introduction

I am delighted to introduce this our first newsletter. The setting up of Ireland's first Dementia Services Information and Development Centre (DSIDC) has been an exciting and challenging time for all concerned. The Irish Centre is located on the top floor of Hospital 4, St. James's Hospital, James's Street, Dublin and employs three full time staff members, a Director, an Education Officer and an Administrator. This newsletter is designed for you. Its purpose is to keep you abreast with interesting developments in the area of dementia care in Ireland and in particular with the Centre's education/training research, information and consultancy services. As the Centre expands and develops, it hopes to act as a conduit through which practitioners can engage with each other and participate in informed debate. Your views are therefore very important to us. Should you have relevant information about dementia, services, policy practice or research issues you would like to share, do not hesitate to contact us. We very much welcome your in-put.

Suzanne Cahill (Director)

Workshops and Training

Since the appointment of our full time Education Officer, Mary Drury, in December 1999, 5 workshops have taken place at the Centre's training room at St. James's Hospital. Additional workshops have recently been brought to other health board areas outside Dublin and plans are now underway to extend this series so that by the end of the year most of the health boards will have been visited.



The programme has a multi-disciplinary focus and is inclusive of all staff members. Workshops have been designed to upskill professional staff to explore a person-centred approach in dementia care. Materials build on the experience and skills already acquired by practitioners and attempt to expand their knowledge.

Courses encourage staff to reflect back on past practices and to consider innovative ways of approaching care in order to minimise the disability associated with dementia. Modules covered include (i) the epidemiology of dementia (ii) differential diagnosis, (iii) a person-centred approach, (iii) assessment, (iv) communication and activities (v) the care environment and (vi) dilemmas confronting professional and formal caregivers. More recently and in response to requests, workshops for staff working in the area of intellectual disability (Downs Syndrome) and dementia have taken place.

It is planned to hold a series of 'Special Interest' Seminars at the latter end of this year. Themes to be covered will include:

1. *Design and Dementia*
2. *Legal Issues and Dementia*
3. *Ethical Dilemmas in Dementia Care*
4. *Update on Dementia Care Research*
5. *The Arts and Dementia*

Further information will be available at a later date on our web site.

Information Service

This aspect of DSIDC's service continues to expand according as more service providers learn about the Centre's activities and resources. The Centre has a very well equipped reference library, which carries books, journals, reports and videos pertaining to dementia and its management. There are four iMac computers situated



in the library with direct internet access and links to relevant databases. We would encourage you to make an appointment before visiting the library. This will ensure you will have access to a computer terminal. The library is open between 10 am - 12 am and 2pm - 4pm.

DSIDC Web Site

Our new web-site will very soon be up and running. One of the most exciting aspects of the new web pages relates to their interactive nature. Users will be encouraged to provide feedback to staff at the Centre about their knowledge of dementia services and research. We are also interested in hearing your views about your experiences using the web pages.

North Sea Joint Meeting

In March, the Centre participated in a multi-disciplinary 3-day conference hosted by the Norwegian Centre for Dementia Research in Oslo. A selection of papers covering a broad range of topics including, "vascular risk factors and cognitive impairment", "early and differential diagnosis", "empowerment and dementia", "smart houses – technology and development", "BPSD" and "best practice in dementia care" were delivered.

The conference provided excellent opportunities for the exchange of ideas about service developments with delegates from other Nordic countries. Conference proceedings will be published and will be available from the Norwegian Centre in June 2000.

Research

The Centre has recently participated in a European (EU funded) project which examined the issue of the interface between family caregivers and institutional care for people with Alzheimer's Disease and related disorders. The work brought together partners from the UK, Spain, Sweden and Ireland to investigate issues regarding people with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders in institutional care, specifically with regard to the relationship between residents' relatives and the management and staff of the institution.

The D.S.I.D.C is currently engaged in a collaborative piece of research with the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland. This study examines the topic of day care design. The work seeks to examine professional and family caregivers' attitudes to design features in day care centres around the country. Findings from the study will be used to contribute to the development of guidelines on design for dementia specific day care.

Launch

On June 8th, the Minister for Health and Children, Mr. Micheal Martin, will officially launch Dementia Services Information and Development Centre at the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. After the Minister's speech, a series of scientific papers focussing on practice and research issues will be delivered. The launch will close with a buffet lunch served at the college.



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