



DEMENTIA SERVICES INFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
promoting excellence in dementia care

Newsletter

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Introduction

Welcome to this the Spring issue of the Dementia Services Information and Development Centre newsletter. As you can see from the content, the DSIDC continues to expand its remit into new and exciting areas which warrant further development. Towards the end of last year for example, the Centre officially launched its new training video on challenging behaviours and dementia at Leopardstown Park Hospital. This video/DVD which is already in popular demand, runs for about 30 minutes, and sells for 15 euros. It can be purchased either from our website or by contacting the Centre's Administrator – Orla Fagan, 4162035. In early December, the Centre hosted its second national conference on dementia, attended by close to, 200 delegates from around the country. The theme of this conference was that of promoting a culture of training in dementia care. The keynote speaker was Dr Cornelia Beck – a Nurse educator from the United States who gave a very powerful overview of dementia care, honing in on the topic of the effectiveness of non-pharmacological interventions. The data presented in this paper, told a convincing story about the value of using complimentary therapies to help reduce some of the challenging behaviours associated with dementia. This paper along with each of the other conference presentations can be downloaded from our website www.dementia.ie.



Prof. Eamon O'Shea speaking at the DSIDC conference on 2nd

A concern about the expected growth in numbers of people being diagnosed with dementia continues and interestingly just prior to Christmas, the Lancet published an article about the current and future prevalence of dementia across the world. The paper reported that today the number of people around the world with dementia is 24 million but these figures will double every 20 years and will reach 81 million by the year 2040. Curiously rates of increase will be highest in developing countries such as India, China, parts of South East Asia and Western Pacific areas where numbers are expected to increase by 300%. No doubt, these countries will have much to learn from other western countries where service development is now more advanced.

Moving closer to home, I want to finish by flagging the fact that we have recently witnessed some very positive moves being made to improve quality of life of older people including those with a dementia resident in long stay care, through the setting up of a new National Committee for residential care. This Committee which meets on a regular basis will by Autumn have submitted its final report to the HSE. It will address the following areas: (i) standards of care, (ii) assessment of needs and the future requirement for long stay care, (iii) service agreements for contract beds and (iv) dementia. Finally and especially for those of you particularly interested in care standards, the National Council on Ageing and Older Persons will on May 8th, be hosting a one day conference in Tullamore, addressing the important topic of "improving quality of life for older people in long stay care settings". The aim of this conference is to emphasise the important work currently being undertaken by long stay care staff in Ireland and to gain a better understanding of the broad and diverse domains of quality of life for all those living in nursing homes around the country.

Suzanne Cahill (Director)

Education and Training

The basic workshop in dementia care continues to be booked particularly by Private Nursing Homes, Community Hospitals and regional groups of nurses organized by the Nursing & Midwifery Planning and Development Units. Most workshops are held at a local level to facilitate access for learners. The following specialist workshops have also been requested and organized again at a local level:

- *Communicating with a Person with a Dementia*
- *Caring for Persons with a Dementia in the Acute Hospital Setting*
- *Challenging Behaviours in Dementia Care*
- *Activities and Dementia*

There is also increasing interest in Dementia Care Mapping - a set of observational tools that captures the perspective of the person with dementia (Bradford Dementia Group, 2005). Information sessions have been organized as requested. The Centre has also recently facilitated a two-day "train the trainer" programme based at St. James's Hospital but attended by staff from the Southern HSE. The two day programme was successful, positively evaluated and it is envisaged that further "train the trainer" programmes will take place over future months.

The Centre has now made a commitment to using e-learning as another teaching and learning strategy for dementia care. This will facilitate easy access to learning for professionals around the country. It is intended that the initial focus will be on a GP education package. The Extra Mural evening courses for Care Assistants continue to be in much demand. Two courses were completed last Autumn and Winter and currently two new courses are running with two more in the planning stage. Anyone wishing to secure a place or source more information about the Extra Mural courses should contact Maeve Clark on 01 416 2035 or mclark@stjames.ie

ENABLE Study

Three research articles are currently being written up from the ENABLE study namely, i) an evaluation of the use and usefulness of products tested in Ireland, ii) cross-national quality of life findings, and iii) cross-national caregiver burden findings. Regarding the use and usefulness of products, findings showed that products were used and considered useful, and when this was not the case, it was mainly due to technical difficulty. Devices that were familiar to the person with dementia, such as telephones, lamps, and night and day calendars (designed in a picture frame), were more successful than unfamiliar products such as item locators and cooker monitors. Apart from the night lamp which was an entirely passive device, most products trialled needed the presence of a caregiver to remind the person with dementia to use the product. Interestingly, caregivers were willing to pay most for devices which required active participation, such as the telephone and the item locator.

Memory Clinic

Since the last newsletter the Memory Clinic has said goodbye to some old faces and hello to some new ones. This change of staff happens at regular intervals as registrars and students working in the clinic move on with their careers and their studies. Clinic continues regardless of the changes, with the referral rate back to normal following the Christmas 'lull'. From a social work perspective, 2006 started on a positive note. The Tanaiste Mary Harney talked of improving community services and providing funding to extend the Home Support Grant scheme. This scheme was designed to help maintain people within their own homes through the purchase of private support. Hopefully the popularity and cost effectiveness of schemes such as these will persuade the government to extend them to all citizens in need. The new initiative will be particularly welcomed by family caregivers who clearly need regular breaks and much support at home.

London Conference on Dementias, Feb 23-24, '06

The aim of this conference was to review current developments in the area of dementia, ranging from research to policy issues. There were a number of interesting presentations delivered by highly regarded professionals including Dr. Robert Coen of St. James's Hospital Memory Clinic who reviewed the current status of Mild Cognitive Impairment. Professor Sube Banerjee from the UK, discussed depression and dementia, referring to its prevalence and the fact that it often goes undetected and under-diagnosed. He mentioned how depression can sometimes be an early indicator of a dementing illness and that depression in dementia can lead to high levels of distress, low quality of life and increased stress and burden on caregivers. Professor John Bond from Newcastle University, talked about quality of life in dementia. He suggested that many older people were terrified about the prospect of developing a dementia. He argued that if people generally understood more about dementia, then this would lead to an overall improvement in their quality of life when they grew older and perhaps developed a dementia. In one of the final presentations of this two-day conference, Dr. Julian Hughes argued that specialist palliative care for dementia has been a neglected area of study and practice. Specialist palliative care he suggested involves focussing on the broader aspects of psychosocial care. The conference was most enjoyable interactive and informative and hopefully the quality of the presentations can be repeated in future years.

M. Gibb

MIRA / DSIDC Conference, 7th April 2006

A recent one-day symposium entitled "Dementia care – choices and challenges", which had been approved for CPD and CME points by the Irish College of Psychiatrists and the Irish College of General Practitioners, was attended by over 80 delegates, from a range of backgrounds including medicine, nursing, psychology, social work and occupational therapy. The speakers, from Ireland, the UK and Australia, presented on a broad range of topics and addressed some of the medical, legal, financial and spiritual aspects of the care of persons with dementia and the presentations generated a lot of interesting discussion among the audience. Feedback on the conference has been very positive and it is gratifying to see so much interest in the area of dementia care.

Dr. K. Bielinski

Upcoming Conferences

16th Alzheimer Europe Conference
www.alzheimer-conference.org/

The 10th International Conference on Alzheimer's Disease and related Disorders
www.alz.org/icad

More info on the Dementia Care conferences available on
www.careinfo.org

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