



DEMENTIA SERVICES INFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
promoting excellence in dementia care

Newsletter

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Introduction

Welcome to this, our Spring newsletter. Since the time we last went to Press it is probably fair to say that there has been a flurry of political activity, most very positive, promoting older peoples' rights and enhancing their quality of care. As an example, the New Health bill launched by the Minister for Health in December which has now gone through the Seanad and is about to be enacted will result in the consolidation of the Health Information Quality Authority (HIQA) and the establishment of the Office of the Chief Inspector of Social Services. The Act will provide for a new system of independent inspection of all residential care services (both public and private), a welcome approach for many. An expert Committee on standards chaired by Dr Tracy Cooper has been meeting regularly since the beginning of the year to fine-tune the 36 draft standards soon to be rolled out for public consultation. Prior to Christmas, Mary Harney also launched the New Fair Deal for Older People in long stay care, a strategy due to come on stream in 2008, and which hopefully will result in a more systematic approach to assessment procedures and entrance protocols to nursing home and a fairer more equitable system for financing nursing home care. In the December budget, we also witnessed a commitment on the part of the government to invest increased funding into the area of home care packages to support frail elderly people including those with a cognitive impairment at home, a new half time Carer's Allowance and increases in both contributory and non-contributory Old Age Pensions. In relation to dementia care, the HSE Working group on dementia has met several times throughout the last year. A national report on dementia providing specific recommendations about future directions for planners and policy makers is currently being finalized. This report set against the backdrop of current and future demographic trends, will contain detailed information on norms and needs for dementia care in Ireland. It will hopefully prove a valuable document for service planners, policy makers and service providers. Just prior to Christmas, news of the establishment of a Northern Irish Dementia Services Centre broke, with two year funding secured from Atlantic Philanthropies. A new Associate Director, Maria Mc Manus has been appointed and the Centre is due to be formally launched in the Stormont Hotel in Belfast on May 3rd. This is a very welcome initiative and one, which no doubt will open up much opportunity for cross border collaboration. Other events which have taken place in recent months include the DSIDC's hosting of a Mini-Symposium on dementia in November which was attended by some 80 health service professionals including a group of Swedish Staff from Stockholm's Silviahemmet led by Geriatrician Dr Wilhelmina Hoffman who was the key note speaker and

who delivered a most inspirational paper. The Symposium provided an excellent forum for the showcasing of some of the innovative work in dementia going on around Ireland. Finally, a new training manual co-authored by Mary Drury and Aine Farrell entitled: "Dementia: A Positive Guide" has recently been completed and is now available. Purchasing forms can be downloaded from www.dementia.ie.

Suzanne Cahill, Director

PhD Scholarships (2)

These 2 full time PhD scholarships funded by Atlantic Philanthropies are being offered by the DSIDC in conjunction with Trinity College Dublin's School of Social Work and Social Policy (see www.dementia.ie or www.socialwork-socialpolicy.tcd.ie). The close off date for application is April 20th. They form part of a larger programme of research, which will be formally launched later this year. The overall aim of this programme is to influence policy, improve quality of care and quality of life for persons with dementia and contribute to changed practice through investigating areas in dementia care previously unexplored in the Irish context and through disseminating research findings to practitioners, policy makers and planners of health and social care services.



Dr Wilhelmina Hoffman MD, Speaking at November Symposium

A study visit to Sweden

In September, myself and a group of Health Service Professionals from Cork spent two days in Sweden visiting 5 different Swedish dementia care units, four in Stockholm and one in Pajella, a small rural hinterland, situated about 1600

homeliness. Bedrooms are 30 square metres in size and hugely personalised. Teamwork is clearly in evidence as is pedagogic dining, where staff join residents at mealtime in a large homely kitchen. Cueing and signage is used effectively throughout. Interestingly, staff work a 12 hour shift to ensure continuity in care, they wear bright cheery tee-shirts, have access to on-going training, and have extremely pleasant staff quarters tucked away at the back of the building for their own respite, including a relaxing sauna room.

Throughout the other visits, what stood out for me was the critical emphasis placed on staff support. One residential facility in Stockholm for example employed a full time Education Officer. Another had "soup mornings" - along with a staff gym, providing opportunities for service providers to take time out and debrief. One other aspect of Swedish residential care, which struck me as very positive, was the ageing in place policies, reflecting the fact that residents had a right to retain their rooms despite their increased dependencies and ultimately die in dignity without being removed. Offering residents autonomy along with meaningful activities both at a group and individual level was also in evidence, as was attention to controlling for unnecessary stimuli from within and outside the environment. Overall the visit was thought provoking and stimulating. It was also reassuring since it reminded us that Irish dementia care practice does not differ enormously from countries like Sweden, the model welfare state, which has a much longer history of ageing and of dementia service development.

Suzanne Cahill, Director

Research

The following papers and book chapters, on dementia care in Ireland are in press and when published will be available on our website.

Farrell, A., Cahill, S., & Bourke, S.: Rural Practice and Community Mental Health Nursing Activity: An Irish Context. (2007) In J. Keady, C. Clarke, & S. Page, (Eds.) Partnerships in Community Mental Health Nursing and Dementia Care. Open University Press & McGraw Hill, Maidenhead, Berkshire.

Cahill, S., Begley, E., & Hagen, I. (2007). Health technologies for people with dementia: The ENABLE project. In E. Moniz-Cook & J. Manthorpe (Eds.) Psychosocial Interventions in Early Stage Dementia: A European Evidence Based Text

Cahill, S., Begley, E., Faulkner, J-P., & Hagen, I. (2007). It gives me a sense of independence. Findings from Ireland on the use and usefulness of assistive technology for people with dementia. Technology & Disability, ISSN 1055-4181/06/17.00

Cahill, S., Macijauskiene, J., Nygard, A-M, Faulkner, J-P. & Hagen, I. (2007). Technology in Dementia. Technology & Disability, ISSN 1055-4181/06/17.00

Cahill, S., Headon, M., Gibb, M., Drury, M., & Bruce, I. (2007). The Subjective Experiences of New Patients and their Primary Caregivers attending a National Memory Clinic: Dementia: The International Journal of Social Research

Staffing

The DISDC recently bid farewell to Siobhan O'Donoghue who worked with us for over 6 months as Administrator during

girl, Emma, and welcome her warmly back to work. We would also like to welcome Deirdre O'Connor who has joined the staff in a consultancy capacity as Education Officer.

Extra Mural Course

The Extra Mural Course in Dementia Care continues to be in high demand. A newly revised 8-week programme was rolled out last Autumn replacing the existing 6-week course. The new programme now includes a full module on "Challenging Behaviours" along with another new module, addressing the impact of the social and built environment. These modules have been added to the pre-existing weighty repertoire of dementia specific topics developed to enable participants an opportunity to learn about the varied and interesting role of dementia care staff. The course aims to support and encourage participants' current knowledge and skills while providing up-to-date information to empower them to make changes in practice and policy. The Centre now offers this course three times throughout the year - winter, spring and autumn. Anyone interested in the course should contact Maeve Clark on 01 416 2035 or mclark@stjames.ie.

Study Day for Occupational Therapists and Social Workers

On Friday last a one-day workshop hosted by the DSIDC was held at St James Hospital for Social Workers and Occupational Therapists working in the area of older people's services and dementia care. The event was attended by over 50 health service providers and papers presented, addressed a diverse range of topics relating to best practice in dementia care, including technology and dementia, person-centred philosophies and occupational therapy assessment, challenging behaviours, the environment and the vulnerability of persons with a cognitive impairment in terms of financial and other forms of abuse. The workshop particularly the afternoon's programme generated much discussion and debate. Overall the day's programme was very well evaluated. The papers presented at this workshop will be available shortly on our website.

Forthcoming Conferences & Meetings

17th Alzheimer Europe Conference, Estoril, May 9-12
www.alzheimer-conference.org

1st Annual Conference and launch of The Northern Ireland Dementia Services Development Centre, Belfast 3rd May 2007 <http://www.dsdc.stir.ac.uk/events.htm>

23rd International Conference of Alzheimer's Disease International: New Perspectives - New Hope, Oct 10th - October 13th 2007, Caracas, Venezuela.
<http://www.adi2007.org/index.cfm>

The Gerontological Society of America. 60th Annual Scientific Meeting 'The Era of Global Aging: Challenges and Opportunities' November 16-20, 2007 San Francisco, CA
<http://www.agingconference.com/>

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland - Annual Conference, Dublin, 21st - 22nd September 2007. <http://www.alzheimer.ie>



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