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AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION
ON SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE

Caring for Cognitive Impairment

Newsletter No 11

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Message from the Commission's CEO

The Interim Report from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety highlights the importance of safe and quality care for older people. We recognise the significance of this work and are committed to addressing the needs of people living with cognitive impairment or at risk of delirium, across a number of work programs:

- The National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards require health services to use antipsychotics and other psychoactive medicines in accordance with best practice and legislation
- The [Delirium Clinical Care Standard](#) includes statements aimed at minimising antipsychotic use
- [The First Australian Atlas of Healthcare Variation](#) examined rates of antipsychotic prescribing; a repeat analysis was undertaken in the [third Atlas](#)
- The Cognitive Impairment Program continues to raise awareness of the importance of safe and quality care of people with cognitive impairment. The [Cognitive Care website](#) hosts up-to-date information, resources, events and stories from individuals and health service organisations.

I encourage you all to continue to submit your stories or a summary of your health service organisation's initiatives either by using the [Share your story](#) form online or by emailing cognitive.impairment@safetyandquality.gov.au

Regards,

Adjunct Professor Debora Picone AO

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Intellectual disability resources

[Julian's Key](#)

This tool aims to improve communication for people living with disability, their families and carers in a health and hospital setting; and is currently being trialled in Queensland.

[Say Less, Show More](#)

This series of photo stories (visuals) was developed by the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) to support children, young people and adults, including those with a disability, during routine medical procedures. The initiative is based on collaborative partnerships between health and disability sectors, and includes an e-learning package to help health professionals use the visuals, additional support materials, promotional tips, posters and postcards.

The [ACI website](#) has many more resources available, including two captioned '[Circle of Support](#)' videos that show how health outcomes for people with intellectual disability can be improved when fear, anxiety or mental health concerns prevent them from getting the medical help they need.

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Primary care resources

[People with dementia: A care guide for general practice](#) is a newly released resource from the Cognitive Decline Partnership Centre. Designed for use in general practice, it assists with decision making on how to provide the best care for a person with dementia. The guide addresses six priority topics that a general practitioner or primary care worker is likely to encounter when providing care for a person with a dementia diagnosis:

- Communicating: Diagnoses & Consultations for People with Dementia
- Caring for People with Dementia Experiencing Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms
- Elder Abuse: Identification and Screening
- Dementia in People with Intellectual Disability
- Dementia Prevention
- Supporting Carers of People with Dementia.

The guide was released at the Australasian Association of Gerontology Conference on Thursday 7 November 2019.

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Carer resources

[Caring About Dementia](#) is a series of videos for carers of people living with dementia produced by HealthWISE.

Topics include:

- Communication
- Distraction and Redirection
- Self-Care for Carers
- Personal Care
- Driving
- Bits and Bobs - a variety of ideas to try
- Carer's morning tea series - carers discuss their experiences and ideas
- Professor Sue Kurlle (Geriatrician) talking about a range of topics, including the importance of exercise, driving, pain, sleep, weight loss, wandering and visual problems.

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Programs and initiatives

[Delirium Collaborative](#)

Safer Care Victoria is leading a [Delirium Collaborative](#) in partnership with the **Institute for Healthcare Improvement** (IHI). Twenty-two hospitals worked together to improve the prevention, recognition and management of delirium with the aim of reducing the average length of stay by 0.5 days and falls by 20 per cent in hospitalised patients aged 65 years and older by 30 November 2019.

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Share your story - Port Pirie Regional Health Service



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The Port Pirie Regional Health Service has had very positive results from implementing the Comprehensive Care of Older Persons project. The health service experienced a dramatic increase in staff and patient engagement and a demonstrated decrease in incidences of hospital-acquired delirium. Some of the strategies included:

- Investing in extensive staff education resources
- Collaborating with community members and support groups to enhance the service's ability to provide an individualised patient and family-centred approach to cognitive impairment care delivery
- Upgrading the inpatient multidisciplinary whiteboards to include a column for cognitive impairment (using the Ballarat Health Services' Cognitive Impairment Identifier (CII) symbol), which triggers a high priority pharmacy review and medication reconciliation.

Port Pirie was the first major country hospital to implement this project as part of its commitment to the Caring for Cognitive Impairment Campaign. [Read the full story](#) on the Cognitive Care website.

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Open consultation

The [National Framework for Action on Dementia 2015 - 2019](#) (the Framework) is a guiding document developed by Commonwealth, state and territory governments to create a strategic, collaborative and cost-effective response to dementia across Australia.

The Australian Health Minister's Health Services Principal Committee has initiated a national framework evaluation project that is being led by the Western Australian Department of Health and is supported by a national dementia working group.

In order to explore the effectiveness of the Framework, they seek your input to ensure the best outcomes for people with dementia and their carers. This consultation will:

- Evaluate the existing Framework
- Provide an opportunity to inform and scope options for national strategies to address dementia in the future

You can take part in the consultation process by completing an [online survey](#), from 19 December until 31 December 2019.

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Events

The **Australasian Delirium Association Meeting** will be held in Brisbane on 2-4 September 2020. The meeting will feature a line-up of international medical, nursing and allied health experts speaking on a number of aspects of delirium including basic clinical care, systems for managing delirium and high level research. Go to www.delirium.org.au for updates.

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Other news

A study by the Australasian Delirium Association published in the [British Medical Journal](#) estimates the economic impact of delirium in the Australian population in 2016-2017 at \$8.8 billion, including financial costs and its burden on health. The study also found that there are more than 130,000 cases of delirium each year in Australia.

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Contact us

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