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AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION ON SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE

WEDNESDAY 12 AUGUST

CARING FOR COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT



Newsletter No. 12

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSION'S CEO

Welcome to the latest edition of the Cognitive Impairment Newsletter.

We are all well aware of the challenges faced by people with cognitive impairment when accessing health care. This month I am pleased to share our new resources for people with cognitive impairment and the clinicians who care for them.

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) has developed an important new guide for people with cognitive impairment explaining their health care rights. We also have new resources for healthcare professionals on the safe care of those with cognitive impairment during COVID-19, when the experience of being in hospital can be more challenging than usual.

Although this is a difficult time for implementing and assessing cognitive care programs in health services, it has never been more important for clinicians to share their expertise and knowledge. If your health service has introduced an initiative, please share it via the [Share your story](#) online form or by emailing cognitive.impairment@safetyandquality.gov.au.

We are also currently reviewing our Delirium, Hip Fracture Care and Antimicrobial Stewardship clinical care standards and welcome your input.

Kind regards,

Adjunct Professor Debora Picone AO

HEALTHCARE RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE WITH COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT

The Commission has recently published a new consumer resource for people with cognitive impairment, their families and carers: [My Healthcare Rights – a guide for people with cognitive](#)

[impairment](#).

This resource aligns with the [Charter of Healthcare Rights](#) and provides information about the care people with cognitive impairment have the right to expect if they go to hospital. It was developed in collaboration with Dementia Australia, people living with dementia, and carers.

We have also developed an [Easy English](#) version of this resource to make this important information accessible to those with cognitive impairment and low English literacy.

We recommend providing these resources in a range of settings such as outpatient services, as part of pre-admission packs, in emergency departments, and in general and specialist wards, such as aged care wards.

COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT AND COVID-19

People with cognitive impairment may find hospital even more frightening than usual during the pandemic. The environment may seem unfamiliar, with people wearing personal protective equipment, and visitor restrictions may mean that family and carers are not present.

Drawing on extensive consultation with people living with dementia, carers, clinicians and researchers, the Commission has produced a [fact sheet](#) and [poster](#) to support health service organisations in providing safe care for people with cognitive impairment during this time.

These resources also provide an important reminder of key actions in the NSQHS Standards. These include discussing goals of care with the patient or their support person or substitute decision-maker, seeking the involvement of carers, implementing delirium-prevention strategies, and only using psychotropic medicines according to guidelines and legislation.

LATEST COVID-19 RESOURCES

The Commission's website has a dedicated [COVID-19](#) page featuring up-to-date guidance for clinicians and the community on how to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure and infection. A range of resources are available with the latest advice on infection prevention and control, PPE, hand hygiene, medicines management and more.

ACCREDITATION AND COVID-19

To reduce the demand on healthcare services and comply with physical distancing requirements, the Commission will continue to maintain the accreditation status of health service organisations during the response phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For further details, including exceptions where health service organisations are required to undergo a reassessment or interim assessment, see the Commission's statement: [Accreditation – Responding to extraordinary circumstances arising from COVID-19 pandemic](#).

CONSULTATION ON CLINICAL CARE STANDARDS

The Commission is currently reviewing three clinical care standards, [Delirium](#), [Hip Fracture Care](#) and [Antimicrobial Stewardship](#) Clinical Care Standards. If you provide care in these areas, or work for a health organisation that does, we are keen to hear about the impact of

each of the standards and your suggestions for improvements.

[Click to complete our short 5 minute survey.](#)

Please forward the survey link to others in your network who may also wish to provide feedback. The survey will close at 5.00pm, Friday, 14 August 2020.

RESEARCH UPDATES

The Cognitive Impairment Support (CIS) Program at Redcliffe Hospital

While COVID-19 has temporarily delayed the launch of the initiative, Redcliffe Hospital is ready to implement and evaluate its Cognitive Impairment Support (CIS) Program across five acute care wards. It aims to use an all-of-hospital approach to improve awareness of, and communication with, patients experiencing cognitive impairment. The program incorporates increased screening, embedded use of a care pathway, use of a Cognitive Impairment Identifier and education of clinical and non-clinical staff.

The CIS Program is a nurse-led multidisciplinary and cross-institutional study and the investigative team were successful in securing a competitive Nursing and Midwifery Research Fellowship to implement and evaluate the program's effectiveness over an 18-month period. Impact on patient outcomes, staff and carer satisfaction, staff knowledge and confidence, and health economics will be included in the evaluation.

You can read more about this initiative on the [Programs, Networks and Research](#) page of our website.

Invitation to participate in research – COGNISANCE

The Co-Designing Dementia Diagnosis and Post Diagnostic Care (COGNISANCE) project, led by The Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing at the University of New South Wales, aims to improve the diagnosis experience and the post-diagnostic support received by people with dementia and their carers.

The initial phase of the project, which will run for three years, will gauge the current experiences of people with dementia, family care partners and health care professionals via surveys and focus groups.

Surveys can be completed [online](#), via hard copy, or by phone interview. Focus groups will be conducted online, by individual interview online, or by telephone.

Following this research, information toolkits will be developed to provide diagnosis and post-diagnostic support for both healthcare workers and people with dementia and their carers.

More information on this project is available on the Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing [website](#) or by contacting Lauren King on 0432 625 747.

SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS

Dementia Australia COVID-19 resources

The Dementia Australia website has published a number of COVID-19 resources including a [fact sheet for older Australians on COVID-19](#).

Other resources available include:

- [Tips for carers, families and friends of people living with dementia](#)
- [Tips for residential aged care providers](#)
- [Tips for home care providers](#)
- [Tips for people living with dementia](#).

The National Dementia Helpline is operating as usual: 1800 100 500.

EVENTS

Due to the global pandemic and ongoing travel restrictions, the Australasian Delirium Association has postponed the DECLARED 2020 conference to 2021. "Delirium: Past, Present and Future" will now be held in Brisbane, 8-10 September 2021. You can stay up-to-date with the conference plans through the association's [website](#) and via Twitter: #declared2020.

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