Using Psychosocial Interventions in Care Homes: Experiences of Staff, Residents & Relatives

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NIHR WHELD
Improving well-being and health for people with dementia
Background

- Delivering high quality care in care homes, with appropriate antipsychotic use, a key challenge for all
- Psychosocial interventions can improve mental health outcomes in people with dementia
- Modest benefits to date
  - Some have positive yet “not significant” impact
  - None have been widely implemented
- What are the challenges and conditions required for their successful implementation?
Improving Well-being and Health for People with Dementia (WHELD)

- To develop and evaluate an optimized psychosocial intervention that can be routinely implemented as part of NHS care

- **Work Plan 1: Systematic review**
  - Work Plan 2: Optimize and adapt interventions
  - Work Plan 3: Pilot study and qualitative evaluation
  - Work Plan 4: Finalise optimizes WHELD intervention
  - Work Plan 5: Field testing and RCT
  - Work Plan 6: Dissemination
Research Methods

Systematic review and meta-synthesis of qualitative evidence

- Aim: To understand what underlies the successful implementation of psychosocial interventions in care homes
Systematic Review

- **Search Strategy:**
  - Terms relating to dementia, care homes, psychosocial interventions and qualitative research

- **Data Sources:**
  - English only articles (1995-Jan 2011): Medline; PsychINFO; BNI; EMBASE; CINAHL; ASSIA; AMED; SIGLE. Hand searched references, relevant journals, publications of influential research groups

- **Study Selection:**
  - Any intervention derived from a psychological or psychosocial model. Interventions delivered to informal / formal caregivers will be included if a primary aim is to improve outcomes of people with dementia. Exploratory studies and purely descriptive or theoretical papers will be excluded
Study Selection Process

Potentially relevant citations after duplicates removed **n=2384**

Articles screened on basis of title and abstract **n=2384**

Full text articles assessed for eligibility **n=123**

Relevant articles to include in qualitative synthesis **n=39**
  Individual studies **n=34**

Articles excluded **n=2271**
  Descriptive **n=29**
  Quantitative **n=26**
  Exploratory **n=7**
  Theoretical **n=6**
  Not psychosocial **n=6**
  Unrelated outcome **n=5**
  Other care settings **n=4**
  No methods **n=1**

Other sources **n=17**

Medline **n=125**
PsychINFO **n=69**
Embase **n=322**
BNI **n=18**
ASSIA **n=322**
CINAHL **n=416**
SIGLE **n=1622**
Findings

- **Types of Intervention:**
  - Music interventions (4), Reminiscence (4); Exercise & other therapeutic activities (4); Staff training and supervision (4); Communication strategies (3); Models of dementia care (3); Methods of orientation (2); Animal interventions (2); Nature related activities (2); Other (6).

- **Care Settings:**
  - USA (14), Sweden (5), England (5), Canada (5), Australia (2), Ireland (1), Japan (1), Norway (1)

- Findings highlighted “elements”, “conditions” and “challenges” for a successful intervention
Elements of a Successful Intervention – People with Dementia

- Connecting with others
  - Line of communication
  - Bringing the world in
  - Mutual understanding
  - Social inclusion
- Meaningful contribution
- Opportunity to reminisce
Elements of a Successful Intervention - Focus on Staff

- Seeing beyond the illness
  - Learning personal histories
  - Seeing the person in a family context
  - Dismantling “us” and “them”

- Examining the approach to care
  - Opportunities for reflection
Conditions Required for a Successful Intervention

- Reliance on staff
  - Provide access to intervention
  - Knowing the person
    - Provide appropriate encouragement
    - Provide appropriate reassurance
    - Tailor the intervention to preferences
    - Tailor the intervention to abilities

- Active involvement of the family

- Flexibility
Challenges to a Successful Intervention

- Interventions took time
  - “Worth it”
  - Pressures on time and staffing
- Institutional philosophy
  - Focus on “priority needs”
  - Avoidance of risk
- Attitudes of individuals
  - Uncomfortable with intervention
  - General resistance
Conclusions & Implications

- Staff commitment, knowledge & skills
- Individualised approach
  - Collaboration of relatives; flexible approach
- Attitudes around risk
- Resources & time
  - Incorporate intervention into everyday care
  - Organisational support
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The WHELD Pilot Study

- Pilot study with 16 care homes
  - To find out the most effective combination of psychosocial treatments for residents to improve quality of life, reduce prescribing and reduce falls
- Pilot interventions
  - Person Centred Care
  - Social Intervention & Pleasant Events
  - Exercise Intervention
  - Antipsychotic Review
- Delivery
  - WHELD Therapists; WHELD Champions

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Qualitative Evaluation

- Pre-intervention and post-intervention focus group discussions with care staff

- Aims & objectives:
  - Understand context in which intervention takes place
  - Engage staff
  - Deliver support that is appropriate to care environment

- 8-10 members of care staff
  - Include WHELD Champions, activity co-ordinator; exclude manager
  - Range of experience and expertise
Groups so far...

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Impressions & Emerging Themes
Challenges in the home

- **Family as barrier to PCC**
  - Do not always understand dementia
  - Wishes may not reflect the needs and choices of residents

- **One-to-one**
  - Benefits staff and residents
  - Difficult at best, often impossible
  - Pressure to focus on tasks

- **Occasional divisions among staff**
Views on interventions

- Social activities and exercise
  - Wide range of activities in place, but welcome ideas
  - Activities outside usual times; involvement of other staff
  - Activity as part of everyday care
  - Allowing residents to know staff

- Anti-psychotic review
  - Mixed response

- Receptive to support in person-centred care
Attitudes towards WHELD

- Term “intervention” undesirable
- Importance of WHELD Therapist knowing the home, knowing the residents
- Help to focus care home
- Appreciated recognition that this is a skilful and demanding job
Thank you!

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