Do social workers consider there to be an ‘optimal’ time for a person with dementia to move to a care home?

Workforce perspectives on the care and support of older people in England

Dr Laura Cole 25th April 2018

Social Care Workforce Research Unit, King’s College London
Acknowledgements and disclaimer

Research team: Kritika Samsi (PI), Jill Manthorpe and Laura Cole

Study is funded by the NIHR School for Social Care Research.

This presentation reports independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research School for Social Care Research. The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the NIHR SSCR, the NHS, the National Institute for Health Research or the Department of Health and Social Care.
Outline

Background
Aims
Methods
Emerging findings
Next Steps
References
Background

Moving to a care home may be difficult decision for some people with dementia and their carers.

For many, it appears that residential care is still “the last resort” with limited options and very low expectations of care (Alzheimer’s Society 2013a).

People with dementia are often not included in decision, potentially impacting on longer-term adjustment in the care home.
Background

Determining when (if any) is an “optimal time” to make this move may be challenging.

Dementia Priority Setting Partnership - Alzheimer Society and James Lind Alliance (Alzheimer’s Society 2013b)

“When is the optimal time to move a person with dementia into a care home setting?”
Aims of the study

3 year, 3 part, multi-methods study which investigates:

1. **Factors** that affect decision to move

2. **Drivers** of this decision

3. What (if any) may be considered an ‘**optimal**’ time to move

Fact sheets to aid decision-making process
## Study design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART 1</th>
<th>PART 2</th>
<th>PART 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Systematic Review</strong></td>
<td><strong>Qualitative Interviews</strong></td>
<td><strong>Factorial Survey</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Thorough search in existing evidence to identify gaps in our understanding | Retrospective experiences and reviews of a move | Discrete factors  
Series of vignettes  
Factorial survey  
Up to 100 dementia care practitioners |
| Published: *International Psychogeriatrics* | **Social workers**  
• Care home managers  
• Family carers  
• People with dementia | Multiple regression models will be used to determine factors (or a combination of factors) that impact on a decision |
Methods

• Recruitment was through managers and team leaders

• Has experience of supporting a person with dementia to move to a care home.

• Phenomenological qualitative approach

• Face-to-face semi-structured interviews - transcribed

• Analysed thematically

• Short demographic form
Participants

20 social workers from 3 Local Authorities
• 2 men
• diverse ethnicity
• 24-60 year olds
• 1-24 years of experience
• 7 senior social workers, 10 social workers, 3 care managers
• 4 social workers had post graduate degrees, care managers had NVQ Level 3
• 14 community, 5 worked in hospitals, 1 both
Findings

1. Factors considered during decision making
2. Process of the move
3. Is there an “optimal” (or best) time?
1. Factors considered during decision-making

Telecare
  - Multiple visits
  - Complete care package?

Day centre

Everything done to respect these
Wishes of person with dementia

“Personally, I think it would be really nice if people were looking into that [care home] option at an earlier stage. [Family relatives] haven't talked about the future, especially not with the person. They've kind of just tried to not really use the dementia word.” (SW02)

Gas / electric appliances
Risks and safety
  - Walking outside at night

Carer capacity to continue to care
  - Perceived ability
    - 24 hour care

“She was so vehement about wanting to stay at home that we had to do all in our power to keep her at home, even if it meant things like . . . she did fall down the stairs, because she refused to put her proper slippers on. We knew that was a risk. But we knew that she actually wanted to stay at home, right the way through. And so, I was very reluctant to [move her].” (SW06)
2. Process of the move

Assessment
Respite as stepping stone
Visiting potential care homes
Choosing a care home
Making the decision
Settling in
Process of the move

Assessment
Generally started with assessment of needs
Including capacity assessments, where relevant
Respite as stepping stone

“[We say to them] “go in for a week, I’ll come in a couple of times during that week, we will talk about it, and I promise you at the end of that week, you’ll go back home and we’ll keep talking about it”. So I think respite is a really really useful way. You can't talk with somebody in their home about going into residential care, because they can't picture it, it fills them with fear, they don't understand it.” (SWo6)
Process of the move

Visiting potential care homes

Did not always visit care homes

Rely on family/friends to do this

Sometimes brokerage firm

Sometimes an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) will visit

Would visit if no family or friend around
Process of the move

Choosing a care home

- CQC ratings and review
- Location
- Stability of care team
- Environment – valued “feel” for the place

“A lot of people are very anxious about what they see on telly and what happens to people. So we just say, “well you can ask questions, the CQC website. Go round and get a feel for the place. Go maybe once or twice.” (SW19)
Process of the move

**Making the decision**

# Person with dementia being ‘ready’
# Often via best interest decision meeting: MDT + advance decisions + previous wishes

“Because sometimes you will have family members that will ring up and they want to take the lead with everything and actually is it appropriate for them?... Yes, they’re their next of kin and it's important that we keep them involved. But at the end of the day, the person we are discharging should be at the heart of that process.” (SW05)
Process of the move

**Settling in**

Family most often see to this

Social worker will help if no family/friends

Personal belongings, photos, furniture eases transition

Feeling well cared-for by compassionate staff

Conduct a 6 week’s assessment/review
3. Is there an “optimal” (or best) time?

Move in early?

Move during later stages?
3. Is there an “optimal” (or best) time?

Awareness can help with the decision making

“I think it's better to give them the opportunity to adapt into such an environment and they do, they do sometimes.” (SW14)

Eligibility for Local Authority funding problematic; might be easier for self-funders
3. Is there an “optimal” (or best) time?

Move during later stages?

Limited awareness can be beneficial in minimising distress

Waiting for a trigger, but avoid crisis

“Moving in too early, you are de-skilling someone. A lot of homes, they do things for you. You are in a 24 hour living environment, where they get you up at a certain time, they make tea for you, they make lunch for you. You don't really have that independence.” (SW10)
Concluding comments

Tremendous responsibility weighing up different factors to advise/make decision about moving a person with dementia to a care home

Acting in the best interest of the person with dementia
  • Even if over-riding their wishes
  • Reports of these having positive outcomes

The timing of the decision is difficult
Next steps

• Interview findings will help us develop real life stories (vignettes)

• Survey will ask people what they would do if faced with a similar story

• We will be able to ‘jiggle’ the stories so we know the most important consideration

• Campbell Killick and KCL statisticians
References


Thank you!

Any questions/thoughts?

laura.cole@kcl.ac.uk
@AdalineCole

kritika.1.samsi@kcl.ac.uk
jill.manthorpe@kcl.ac.uk