A18 - When the researchers leave...
MGrehan
HarringtonCare, NSW

Better for Everyone (B4E) was an Australian Government-funded knowledge translation project. B4E synthesised evidence-based interventions with staff, families and the physical environment that reduced behaviours of concern and improved well-being in nursing home residents. Researchers included registered nurse mentors who provided education and 14 months of mentoring staff, using a case conferencing approach to actively support the staff to deliver relationship
focused on care. Also provided were foundational family support groups and cash incentives for changes to the physical environment.

The project was successful in significantly reducing behaviours of concern and was appreciated by the seven participating facilities. However, care interventions lapsed after the researchers withdrew, despite the intention of training mentors from within facilities to continue the approach. The question remains why good processes with demonstrably beneficial results fail to become ‘practice as usual’.

Analysing notes from weekly support teleconferences with nurse mentors provide potential reasons why there was failure to translate the evidence:
• Lack of staff with appropriate clinical skills.
• Lack of clinical leadership.
• Failure of researchers to work simultaneously at senior management/executive and grass roots levels to effect change.
• Practical resourcing pressures that curtails staff attending training and mentoring (case conferencing).
• Research focus on psychosocial aspects and lack of cost-benefit or economic analysis that ‘speaks’ to senior managers and boards.
• Risk appetite and priorities of age care organisations; and individual facility manager ‘buy-in’ to the project.

Future directions that support translation of psychosocial research in nursing homes will need to increasingly involve economic and policy aspects, at local, organisational and legislative levels, to have effective processes that embrace and instil good evidence as day-to-day practice.