SUMMARY REPORT

Evaluating residential facilities for people in the later stages of dementia

Dementia Collaborative Research Centre Assessment and Better Care

January 2015
Evaluating residential facilities for people in the later stages of dementia

Background
The number of aged care beds occupied by people with dementia is increasing steadily. There is a need for environmental audit tools that are relevant to the needs of people in the final stages of dementia as well as those who are mobile.

Objective
Develop a tool to audit environmental features required by a wide range of people with dementia.

Method
The 72 item Environmental Audit Tool, evaluated with the support of a previous DCRC-ABC grant, was supplemented with 56 items describing the environmental needs of people in the final stages of dementia. Two independent raters used this draft tool and a widely used North American assessment tool to assess 30 aged care homes. The Environmental Audit Tool - High Care (EAT-HC), comprising eight sub-scales with acceptable levels of internal reliability and inter-rater reliability was constructed. Validity was assessed against the American scale and the ability of the EAT-HC to differentiate units specifically for people with dementia from other units.

Results
When two raters use the EAT-HC independently their results are sufficiently similar for the EAT-HC to be described as having satisfactory inter-rater reliability. The results of the EAT-HC have a strong relationship to the results of the American scale and the EAT-HC is able to distinguish between facilities used specifically for people with dementia and general facilities.

Conclusion
The EAT-HC promises to be a useful assessment tool for those wishing to evaluate the quality of the environment used by a wide range of people with dementia, particularly those in the final stages. It offers the advantage of being constructed to reflect the Australian aged care context.

Outputs
The EAT-HC is available in hard copy from this website http://www.dementiaresearch.org.au/index.php?option=com_dcrc&layout=staffmember&smid=52&Itemid=144. It may be used free of charge for non-commercial purposes. The scoring of the EAT-HC is supported by an Excel spreadsheet available from this website. The use of this spreadsheet is highly recommended to ensure a consistent method of calculating the sub-scale scores. The spreadsheet also provides a graphical summary of the results that is very useful for indicating the strengths and weaknesses of a facility.

Authors
Professor Richard Fleming, University of Wollongong.
Kirsty Bennett, University of Wollongong

Acknowledgements
This project has been funded by the Dementia Collaborative Research Centre – Assessment and Better Care, University of New South Wales as part of an Australian Government Initiative.

Disclaimer
The views expressed in this work are the views of its author/s and not necessarily those of the Australian Government.