

measures, there is little data regarding how well they work, particularly in non-DS ID.

Furthermore, the pathways to assessment and care for people with ID who do develop dementia are currently unclear. Older Australians with ID are at risk of 'falling through the gaps', and receiving inadequate care in either a disability- or aged-care service (Carling-Jenkins *et al* 2012; Iacono *et al* 2014).

We need to better equip the mainstream health and aged-care workforce in distinguishing the symptoms of dementia from pre-existing ID, and to promote clearer communication across sectors. ■

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Sexuality and dementia education trial

Residential aged care staff interested in improving their skills in the difficult area of supporting the sexual expression of people with dementia are wanted for a new study trialling live educational webinars.



The research team, led by Griffith University's Dr Cindy Jones (pictured), is seeking residential aged care staff (eg registered, enrolled or student nurses, personal care workers, diversional therapists or occupational therapists) who are directly involved in providing care for older people with or without dementia, to participate in a series of webinars starting in the first week of September. Applications close on Friday 19 August. Participants will be asked to attend six weekly, 90-minute interactive education webinars from work or home and complete online surveys.

Dr Jones said the study aims to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the

webinars to increase knowledge, improve attitudes and change care staff's practice toward the expression of sexuality by people with dementia in residential aged care facilities (RACFs). Participants will be assessed before and after the program on their knowledge and perceptions toward the expression of sexuality of older people in RACFs, and then three months later to see what has changed in their daily practice.

Dr Jones said sexual feelings, desires and needs of people with dementia and their partners can be affected by the disease and can be very difficult to discuss with care staff.

"Recent national and international research highlights the need for education and training of staff in RACFs so they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to better respond to the expression of sexuality by older people, particularly those with dementia."

The webinars build on information in a resource developed by Dr Jones in 2013 with the QLD Dementia Training Study Centre, *Sexualities and dementia: an education resource for health professionals* (available at <http://dtsc.com.au/download/sexualities-and-dementia/>).

The study, *Sexualities and dementia: improve knowledge, attitudes and practices in aged care via interactive live webinars*, is funded by the Dementia Collaborative Research Centres and supported by the Dementia Training Study Centres.

The research team also includes Professor Wendy Moyle (Menziess Health Institute) and Associate Professor Belinda Goodenough (NSW/ACT Dementia Training Study Centre, University of Wollongong). ■

For further information about participating in the study, contact either Dr Jones on (07) 3735 8440 / email c.jones@griffith.edu.au or Professor Moyle on (07) 3735 5526 / email w.moyle@griffith.edu.au

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