Project Proposal

An Australian Government Initiative

Centre	DCRC – Assessment and Better Care
Partner Institution	Aged Mental Health Research Unit, Monash University
Project ID	
Project Name	The use of Skype™ family conversations compared to regular telephone calls to reduce agitation in people with dementia
Date of Proposal	17 August 2011

1. Investigator Details

Principal Investigator	
Title/Name	Dr Eva van der Ploeg
Institution	Aged Mental Health Research Unit, Monash University
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First Associate Investigator	
Title/Name	Prof Daniel O'Connor
Institution	Aged Mental Health Research Unit, Monash University
Email address	Daniel.OConnor@monash.edu

Project Details

Project Objectives (max. 2)	To compare the impact of conversations with family members made via Skype™ computer software, which combines audio and video signals, with regular telephone conversations on the levels of agitation, mood and engagement of aged care facility residents with dementia.
Project Description (200 words max)	This project will compare the effects of Skype™ and regular telephone conversations with a family member on the levels of agitation, mood and engagement shown by aged care residents with dementia and an agitated behaviour. Conversations with a family member will be held in random order via Skype™ computer software and regular audio-only telephones on four occasions each. Conversations will last for a maximum of 20 minutes. A researcher will conduct observations before, during and after the conversations to record the presence or absence of the target behaviour and residents' engagement and affect.
Research Plan	See attachment
Ethics	**Has this Project been approved by an ethics committee?** ☐ yes ☒ no ☐ n/a – please say why
	If no, please indicate the current status of the application. Still in design phase. **If yes, please give details (name of institution, date)**

2. Timetable

Project Start Date	01/04/2012
Project End Date	01/04/2013

Milestones List a minimum of four milestones per year for progress reporting (e.g. completion of ethics, data collection, analysis, dissemination)	
First Milestone	**Ethics submission**
Expected Completion	**01/04/2012**
Second Milestone	**Ethics approval**
Expected Completion	**01/06/2012**
Third Milestone	**Start data collection**
Expected Completion	**01/08/2012**
Fourth Milestone	**Complete data collection**
Expected Completion	**01/04/2013**

3. Proposed Project Outputs

Academic Publications	1
Presentations	2
Guidelines/Recommendations	
Capacity Building	
Leverage (grant applications)	
Other	

4. Knowledge Translation

How will you translate research findings into practice?
This is the first study to our knowledge of the impact of Skype™ (audio + video signals) conversations on levels of agitation, engagement and affect in nursing home residents with dementia and associated agitation. If Skype™ reduces agitation, and boosts engagement and affect, a larger study will be warranted with an added focus on the benefits for family members and residential facilities. Participating facilities and family members will be provided on request with a summary of the results and with recommendations for continuing use.

How do the expected outcomes of this project have the potential to improve current practice? In what other ways can knowledge translation be enhanced for this project?
If Skype™ interaction is successful in reducing agitation, facilities may consider it as an intervention when residents are most agitated. With the current use of smart phones many family carers, especially children and grandchildren, could potentially be available at set peak times to interact with residents. Settling of agitated residents could potentially also

benefit staff and co-residents in aged care facilities.

5. Consumer Involvement

Does this project offer the opportunity for consumer involvement?
☒ yes ☐ no Both family members and people with dementia will participate in this project and will guide us in the timing and content of conversations.

6. Linkages

Please list any project or staff linkages within administrating DCRC	None
Please list any project or staff linkages between DCRCs	None
Please list any linkages beyond the DCRCs	None

7. Funding

DCRC Funding for this project	
Salaries (itemised)	Project manager $8,838 Research assistant $14,088
Other (itemised)	Travel costs $4,144 2 x iPads 2.0 with wi-fi + 3G, including accessories and 3G package, $2,000
Total	**$29,070**

Please provide a brief justification for the above budget
Principal investigator Van der Ploeg will be responsible for ethics approval; facility and resident recruitment; obtaining consent; research assistant recruitment and supervision; data analysis and report writing. She will devote 0.1 FTE to this project for one year: 0.1 x $88,375 (including oncosts). Research assistants (RAs) will be responsible for collecting observations. Based on previous studies, we estimate that these will take 90 minutes on average, allowing 60 minutes for observations and 30 minutes for preparation and wrap-up. There will 8 sessions (4 Skype™, 4 regular telephone calls) with each of the 20 participants (240 hours). We will allow another 60 hours for unavoidable rescheduling (300 hours). The current Monash RA pay rate is $46.96 per hour (including oncosts). Travel: There will be eight round trips, each of 35km on average, to aged care facilities for each participating resident (1,400km). Reimbursement is $0.74 per km. Skype™ calls will be made via iPads for reasons of portability, ease of use and signal access.

Non-DCRC Funding for this project	
Salaries (itemised)	None
Other (itemised)	None

In-kind Contributions to this project	
Please list	None

If this project is part of a larger project, for which funding has been sought or applied for, please list details below (Funding Body, Project Name, Amount, Relationship between Projects)
N/A.

DCRC Management to complete
DCRC-funded Project   **DCRC-hosted Project**   **DCRC-supported project** ☒   ☐   ☐

8. Project Proposal Assessment

Depending on the nature of the project and the amount of funding sought, the DCRC might need to use an external reviewer. If so, we may contact you for suggestions.