Dementia Care Research: Challenges in Disseminating and Implementing Findings in Practice

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Overview

The Living with Dementia (LiD) Programme

Examples of Research Projects

Disseminating Research Findings

How best to use Research Findings in Practice

Summary
Dementia in Ireland

By European standards Ireland remains a relatively young country with only 11% of its population currently aged over 65.

Between 38,000 to 42,000 Irish people have dementia, but population ageing means this figures will rise to 100,000 by 2036.

In Ireland the research focus in dementia has had a strong biomedical, pharmacological and clinical focus.

More recent development has been the emergence of more psycho-social dementia care research.
The Living with Dementia (LiD) Programme aims to:

- Train post-graduate research students to undertake social scientific, policy-relevant research on dementia

- Produce and publish high-quality, peer-reviewed research on topics relating to the bio-psycho-social aspects of dementia

- Tackle the marginalization of PwD by changing professional attitudes and altering nihilistic practices in dementia care

- Disseminate research findings to a wide audience of people thereby raising consciousness about dementia and improving public and professional understanding

- Use research findings to bring about change, thereby improving people with dementia (PwD) quality of life
Dilemmas!
Research activity within the academic community judged largely on numbers of publications in high-quality peer reviewed journals

But ........

Peer reviewed journals are not the publications that practitioners tend to read
Conventional approach…. researchers conduct research and disseminate findings within academic settings

Contemporary approach…. Researchers required to disseminate findings more widely in order to ultimately effect change in community awareness, clinical practice and policy (Drapier, et al, 2009)
Our Experience
Examples of Completed projects

- Prevalence of Cognitive Impairment and Dementia in Dublin based Nursing Homes

- Quality of Life of Residents with a Cognitive Impairment in Nursing Homes

- Developing Standards for End of Life Care for Residents dying with Dementia in Nursing Homes

Cahill S, Diaz-Ponce A, Coen RF & Walsh C. The under-detection of cognitive impairment in Nursing Homes in the Dublin Area. The need for on-going cognitive assessment. *Age and Ageing*. 38(1) 2010

“I hate having nobody here, I’d like to know where they all are” Can qualitative research detect differences in Quality of Life among Nursing Home Residents with different levels of Cognitive Impairment? Forthcoming: *Aging and Mental Health*
Examples of On-Going Projects

Research review for Irish National Dementia Strategy 1.

Therapeutic effects of Group Living for PwD

Subjective experiences and Quality of Life

Non-Pharmacological Interventions – facilitators and barriers to their use

Training and educational needs of Health Service Professionals

Apart from publishing in peer-reviewed journals what other strategies can be used to disseminate research findings to a wide audience?
Strategies used by us have included:

1. Identifying key players/stakeholders in dementia knowledge transfer (Draper et al, 2009)

2. Using multifaceted communication strategies

3. Making publications available in different formats

4. Create a simple and compelling message which is clear concise, consistent and takes account of existing knowledge (Abernathy et al, 2001)

5. Use appropriate research methodologies
1. Identify Dementia Stakeholders

Educators
Service Providers
General Public
Carers/consumers
Policy makers and Health Service planners

(Draper et al, 2009, *International Psychogeriatrics, 21(1), S72-S80*)
2. Use Multifaceted Communication Channels

Websites
Seminars
Conferences
Training programmes
Media
Podcasts
Posters
Funder’s Briefs
3. Make Publications Available in Different Formats
Living With Dementia
School of Social Work and Social Policy,

Do You know?

Good solutions are built on good evidence. Become a researcher and help build this evidence. Make a difference and help people with dementia and their Caregivers.

Our Research
We host quarterly seminars inviting national and international experts in the area of Dementia care research. [click here to view our research]

Seminar Series
We host quarterly seminars inviting national and international experts in the area of Dementia care research. [click here to view a list of our seminars]

Our Team
We are a small but committed team dedicated to best practice in dementia care. [click here to read more about our staff]

lwd@tcd.ie
4. Create a simple and compelling message and then communicate it to different audiences in the most appropriate way without technical jargon (Choi, 2005)
Quality of Life of PwD in Nursing Homes

“Even a prisoner is entitled to leave his cell for fresh air once every 24 hours”
“Yes get rid of the straps, the chains around you, that’s about all”
(Male, 80, MMSE 4)
5. Use Participative Action Research

Implement Change

Observation

Reflection

Analysis
But..........

Dissemination alone is insufficient to change practice

How can we ensure that our research findings are being used?

How can we help to implement these findings?
Ideally

Research agenda should be driven by practitioners who themselves are engaged in the research process from conceptualization through to report/paper writing

But such not always feasible or practical
1. Make practitioners aware of research findings & benefits to be derived from same

2. Make findings accessible to practitioners, ensuring the evidence is familiar, comprehensive and credible e.g. practice guidelines

3. Anticipate barriers to implementation

4. Support practitioners in developing strategies to overcome these barriers
Research evidence can be used in different ways:

(i) Direct application to change policy and practice

(ii) Used conceptually to challenge thinking or raising awareness of issues relating to practice

(iii) Used persuasively to support the continuation of current policy or practice or to argue for change

Summary

- Disseminating dementia research findings is hugely important and is relatively easy.

- However ensuring that research evidence is used to improve quality of life and quality of care for all those affected by dementia is a much bigger challenge.

- We need to create forums for academic and practice communities to interact.

- Need to carefully select evidence based information that has been adapted and integrated.

- Need resources and a supportive environment.
Useful Irish dementia websites

- [www.socialwork-socialpolicy.tcd.ie/livingwithdementia](http://www.socialwork-socialpolicy.tcd.ie/livingwithdementia)
- [www.dementia.ie](http://www.dementia.ie)
- [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie)


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