

Report Brief 2

Older people from CALD backgrounds with dementia

Highlights

- ▶ Poor understanding of dementia combined with cultural stigma attached to dementia leads to denial of the condition and/or delayed diagnosis for some older people from CALD backgrounds.
- ▶ Culture and ethnic background can have an impact on dementia diagnosis and culturally sensitive assessment tools are required and should be used where they exist.
- ▶ Older people from CALD backgrounds are often excluded from dementia research due to language barriers, leading to gaps in the evidence base.

Issue

The prevalence of dementia within the older CALD population in Australia is projected to increase more than three-fold, from approximately 35,000 in 2010 to 120,000 by 2050.

While different cultural perceptions of dementia and provision of care to older people from CALD backgrounds are not yet well understood, the projected increase in the number with dementia highlights the need for communities and service providers to understand, develop services for and manage dementia from a CALD perspective.

Project background

This report brief highlights key findings from a review of research project undertaken by the University of Adelaide for FECCA. The aim of the project was to identify current research about best practice in meeting the health, wellbeing and social inclusion needs of older CALD Australians as they age and to make this evidence accessible to aged care service providers, researchers and policy makers. Four broad topic areas were covered in the review:

1. Older people from CALD backgrounds in general;
2. Older people from CALD backgrounds with dementia;
3. Ageing and mental health issues for older people from CALD backgrounds; and
4. CALD carers and carers of older people from CALD backgrounds.

This report brief highlights findings on the dementia topic. The full report describing the findings of this review along with a comprehensive, searchable database of all research identified is available at www.fecca.org.au.

Understanding of dementia

For some CALD communities, poor understanding of dementia and cultural stigma attached to dementia, leads to denial of the condition, and/or delayed diagnosis. Understanding of dementia could be improved by presenting information to:

- ▶ the general community;
- ▶ CALD community groups;
- ▶ family members who care for an older person with dementia; and
- ▶ older people from CALD backgrounds who are, or potentially will be, affected by dementia.

Culturally sensitive assessment and diagnosis

Aged care workers need to respond to CALD care recipients presenting with dementia symptoms by considering:

- ▶ language;
- ▶ religion/spirituality;
- ▶ culture;
- ▶ social support; and
- ▶ management strategies.

Bilingual doctors and adult children of people from CALD backgrounds with dementia have a very important role as the major access points for information.

Once an older person from a CALD background presents with symptoms, screening tools need to take culture into account to ensure an accurate diagnosis. Factors such as age, language and socio-economic status have been found to influence cognitive assessments. The Rowland Dementia Universal Access Screening tool (RUDAS) is now established as a culturally sensitive dementia assessment tool for use in Australia.

People from CALD backgrounds with dementia at risk

Some groups identified at risk include older people from CALD backgrounds with dementia living in mainstream residential care facilities. Risks include social isolation and disruptive behaviour because of communication barriers.

Additionally, the research identifies a need for increased understanding of dementia among aged care nurses and support workers.

Research gaps

More research is needed in the area of older people from CALD backgrounds with dementia including:

- ▶ how different groups of older people from CALD backgrounds who have been diagnosed with dementia cope with and manage the disease;
- ▶ the inclusion of CALD participants in dementia research programs (they are often excluded from initial trials because of language barriers); and
- ▶ how language and cultural barriers for people from CALD backgrounds with dementia in residential care influence wellbeing outcomes.

Resources for service providers

Dementia collaborative research centres (searchable portal for dementia research):
www.dementia.unsw.edu.au

Alzheimer's Australia (dementia help sheets and other resources available in multiple languages):
www.fightdementia.org.au

For more information please contact FECCA at admin@fecca.org.au or (02) 6282 5755.

This project was funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

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