

## Report Brief 4

# CALD carers and carers of older people from CALD backgrounds

### Highlights

- ▶ In general, older people from CALD backgrounds have lower rates of use of care and carers support services compared to older Anglo-Australians.
- ▶ A collaborative approach between different ethno-specific, multicultural and mainstream aged care services and community groups is required to best meet the needs of older people from CALD backgrounds.
- ▶ Family members play an important role in access to information about available services and in making health and care decisions for older people from CALD backgrounds.

### Issue

Research indicates older people from CALD backgrounds use fewer services compared to other older Australians. This is particularly true for low level care services such as home support services but also noted for dementia support services. Additionally, there are identified challenges to adequately meeting the residential care needs of older people from CALD backgrounds.

To some extent the underuse of services by older people from CALD backgrounds is attributed to a heavier reliance on family members to provide care. This means a large number of CALD carers who also require support.

### 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 care and carers 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](http://www.fecca.org.au).

## Providing culturally sensitive aged care

There is an increasing demand for culturally competent aged care workers and a need for mainstream, multicultural and ethno-specific organisations to work together to ensure the needs of older people from CALD backgrounds are met.

Training pathways for a growing number of people from CALD backgrounds entering the aged care workforce are being established and some of these CALD workers are well positioned to provide culturally sensitive care. However, it has been noted that problems can arise when carers and care recipients have language and communication difficulties, or differing cultural norms.

## Informal care and CALD carers

Studies have shown that, in general, older people from CALD backgrounds have a heavier reliance on family members for:

- ▶ accessing information;
- ▶ making health, treatment and aged care decisions; and
- ▶ informal care.

CALD carers are identified as a group at risk of isolation and poor health due to the strain of their care responsibilities and underuse of support services. Support needs vary across cultural groups and the condition of the person being cared for. Some common needs across groups include:

- ▶ education about the conditions of the person being cared for;
- ▶ bilingual doctors/services for each CALD group; and
- ▶ more support for CALD carers.

Additional support needs for some cultural groups, such as financial support and doctor visits at home, were also identified.

## Residential care

Some findings suggest older people from CALD backgrounds in ethno-specific residential care have a better quality of life than those in mainstream residential care. They require less medication and engage in more resident-to-resident communication. In addition to language, cultural aspects that need to be considered in residential care for older CALD populations include food, religious observances, and gender norms.

## Research gaps

More research is needed in the area of care of older people from CALD backgrounds, including:

- ▶ the challenges associated with providing care when care recipients and service providers are not from the same cultural and language background;
- ▶ greater understanding of the impact of caring roles on CALD carers; and
- ▶ the impact of the limited number of ethno-specific residential care for older people from CALD backgrounds.

## Resources for service providers

Queensland Health (resources for working with CALD groups):  
[www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural/health\\_workers/for\\_hlth\\_workers.asp](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural/health_workers/for_hlth_workers.asp)

Carers Australia (resources for CALD carers):  
[www.carersaustralia.com.au/about-carers/culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-carers/resources-for-cald-carers/](http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/about-carers/culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-carers/resources-for-cald-carers/)

**For more information please contact FECCA at** [admin@fecca.org.au](mailto:admin@fecca.org.au) or (02) 6282 5755.

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