

Report Brief 5

Gaps in research

Highlights

- ▶ There is great diversity within the older CALD population and many of the differences in experiences, and aged care preferences within and between cultural groups are not well understood.
- ▶ It is important to identify how older CALD populations are similar to other older populations in Australia and therefore what mainstream services are also appropriate for older people from CALD backgrounds.
- ▶ Existing data available about older people from CALD backgrounds is not used to its full potential to provide information about the ageing and health care needs of this group.

Issue

The overall aim of this review project was to identify current research about best practice in meeting the health, wellbeing and social inclusion needs of people from CALD backgrounds as they age and to make this evidence accessible to aged care service providers, researchers and policy makers.

An important part of this project was identifying the gaps in the current research base. These gaps were identified through collation and review of the currently available research on older people from CALD backgrounds and from service provider and researcher input.

Although a large body of research on older people from CALD backgrounds does exist, there are many areas where more evidence is needed.

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.

Research and literature across these topic areas have been identified. This report brief highlights the identified research gaps. 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.

CALD population groups requiring further research

- ▶ older people from new and emerging communities;
- ▶ smaller CALD population groups;
- ▶ older people from refugee backgrounds;
- ▶ people from CALD backgrounds who arrive in Australia at an older age; and
- ▶ older people from CALD backgrounds who live outside of the most populous states and metropolitan areas.

Topic areas requiring more research

There are many topics where further research is required including:

- ▶ religious, spiritual and faith considerations;
- ▶ CALD care workers as a part of the aged care workforce;
- ▶ an intergenerational perspective on CALD care and support needs and expectations and how this varies across generations;
- ▶ more in-depth understanding of treatment and approaches to care for older people from CALD backgrounds once a dementia or mental health diagnosis has been made;
- ▶ an understanding of how the experiences of older people from CALD backgrounds differ from those of older Anglo-Australian groups across a range of demographic factors; and
- ▶ more information about specific communities and directories of available services.

Evaluations of programs and services

Service providers and researchers who responded to calls for input to the review identified many gaps in evaluating the effectiveness of programs for older people from CALD backgrounds including the need for:

- ▶ wider dissemination of evidence of the effectiveness of programs trialled by service providers;
- ▶ more research around the effectiveness of services and programs in meeting the needs of older people from CALD backgrounds; and
- ▶ more evaluation studies about interventions and programs for CALD carers.

Pathways to filling the gaps

Identifying the research gaps will help guide a research agenda relating to older people from CALD backgrounds. Several recommendations are made as steps towards gaining greater understanding of older CALD populations. These are:

- ▶ continuing to grow the body of research about older people from CALD backgrounds;
- ▶ improving comparability of research results, datasets and data sources;
- ▶ increasing participation by older people from CALD backgrounds in research;
- ▶ mining existing data sources for more information about older people from CALD backgrounds; and
- ▶ updating available literature and resources about older CALD populations on a regular basis.

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

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