

Changing practice in dementia care in the community: developing and testing evidence-based interventions, from timely diagnosis to end of life (EVIDEM)

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Plain English summary

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The needs of people with dementia, and their carers, for information about symptom management and service access are too often inadequately addressed in the course of the disease, from diagnosis through to end-of-life care. With this in mind, we developed a research and development programme that was designed to help change this situation: the EVIDEM programme – Evidence-based Interventions in Dementia. A study of diagnosis and management in primary care (EVIDEM-ED) asked if workplace-based, tailored education would improve medical practitioners' recognition of, and responses to, dementia in general practice. It concluded that education would not change practice. An exercise therapy trial (EVIDEM-E) for behavioural and psychological symptoms in people with dementia did not reduce symptoms but had a positive impact on carer burden. An award-winning project on continence (EVIDEM-C) established the scale of continence problems in people with dementia living in the community, and developed new ways to reduce the impact of incontinence on people with dementia and their families. The End of Life Care study (EVIDEM-EoL) explored the experiences of people with dementia and their families at the end of life, and showed how they could be improved by promoting collaboration between care homes and general practice. How different types of practitioners working with people with dementia understood and applied the new Mental Capacity Act (MCA) (2005) was investigated in the EVIDEM-MCA study. Finally, the programme successfully piloted a research register for people with dementia, and their carers, who wanted to take part in research studies.

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