

Identifying Research Uncertainties

Understanding & engaging with care homes in the South West of England to improve elderly resident care

Jo Day & Iain Lang

NIHR Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research & Care South West Peninsula, University of Exeter Medical School, Exeter, UK

1. Context

- The South West of England is a popular retirement area with a large elderly population and a high number of care homes
- People living in care homes are more likely to have complex needs, comorbidities and cognitive impairment
- Reports in the UK have highlighted unacceptable variation in the health and care services received by elderly residents
- NIHR CLAHRC South West Peninsula seeks to promote the translation of evidence into everyday practice
- Our project was initiated to understand the research uncertainties for the care of elderly people living in care homes



2. Objectives

- To engage with and understand the local and regional public, health and social care, and the care home sector issues to improving the quality of care for elderly residents
- To identify research uncertainties to assist the development of a collaborative programme of research work



Improving care for elderly people living in care homes



3. Method

- A 'bottom-up' approach



- We did a thematic analysis of 200 issues producing 34 'issue' categories
- Further analysis led to refinement of these categories to specific 'ideas'

4. Theme examples

Relations between care home & health service staff	Disseminating & implementing evidence-based initiatives
Admissions to hospital & transitions between settings	Design & the internal / external physical environment
Mealtimes, nutrition & hydration	Care home staff training & skills
Activities & leisure	Social isolation & loneliness
Pay & funding	End of life care
Technology	Dementia care
Prescribing & medication	Spiritual needs
Pets	Crime
Capacity & advocacy	LGBT

5. Discussion

- We found a wide range of issues and our analysis provided 17 specific ideas that could potentially be addressed by future robust research studies
- We collated a wide range of initiatives and interventions that aimed to address the care of elderly residents with varying levels of evidence
- We considered the key challenges and opportunities for undertaking collaborative research work
- We identified a key gap in the capacity and involvement of care homes to access, use and implement research evidence

6. Future work

- Development of collaborative applied research work on how research evidence is disseminated and implemented in care homes
- Continuing engagement with public, researchers and professionals to inform research to help improve care