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IMPROVING DEMENTIA CARE IN HOSPITAL

Dementia rates worldwide are increasing and Australia is no different. To mark World Alzheimer's Month, the Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) has launched new online resources to support healthcare staff to improve care for older people with dementia and delirium in hospital.

Chief Executive of the Agency for Clinical Innovation, Dr Nigel Lyons said older people with dementia can develop delirium. They may experience significant fear, anxiety and increased confusion when they are admitted to hospital and removed from familiar people and surroundings.

"The ACI Caring for Hospitalised Older People (CHOPs) website provides practical resources, tools and advice that equip staff with the confidence and knowledge they need to improve the emotional support and wellbeing of patients with dementia or delirium in hospital", said Dr Lyons.

The website resources are part of a broader strategy by the ACI Aged Health network to improve dementia and delirium care in hospital.

Healthcare staff that visit the CHOPs website can:

- access practical tools and resources to tailor care to the needs of individual patients, their carers and families
- increase their skills at identifying confusion early, so that it can be investigated, treated and appropriately managed
- design and foster safe and supportive environments for older people with dementia, their families and carers
- understand the perspectives and experience of older patients with dementia and delirium
- learn how to work closely with carers and families who have valuable insight into older people's daily care and usual routine

"We need to look for innovative ways of improving patient care. Where successful improvement programs are identified, we need to work out why they are successful, so that we can share the lessons across the health system and drive sustainable evidence based improvements in care", said Dr Lyons.

The ACI has recently committed \$50,000 to partner with Southern NSW Local Health District to study and share an innovative volunteer program that is supporting older people who experience confusion during their hospital stay.

Cath Bateman, Clinical Nurse Consultant supports staff in Bega Hospital to train volunteers to work alongside healthcare staff, providing care and emotional support to older people with dementia and delirium, their families and carers.

Media Release



“Volunteers provide one-on-one support to older people with dementia or confusion, their families and carers, helping them to feel more relaxed, in turn improving their wellbeing and hospital stay. This brings big benefits for patients, their carers and our staff”, said Ms Bateman.

Dr Nigel Lyons congratulated Cath Bateman, and the carers, doctors, nurses, managers and allied health professionals working in rehabilitation and aged care across the NSW Health system who contributed to the CHOPS website, for their contribution to improving healthcare for older people.

“The Bega Volunteer program has been extremely successful in improving the emotional security and care of older people with dementia and delirium in rural hospitals. This is exactly the type of successful innovation that ACI is keen to share through the CHOPs website”, said Dr Lyons.

For more information on the ACI's CHOPs website email Anthea Temple on anthea.temple@aci.health.nsw.gov.au or you can visit www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/chops