

Project Title	Cognitive Impairment screening – point prevalence survey.
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Outline of the project

People aged over 65 are half of all hospital admissions, and almost half of people over the age of 65 in hospital will experience cognitive impairment (most commonly an underlying chronic dementia or a potentially preventable acute delirium) during their hospitalisation. Screening of this population for cognitive impairment is a therefore core component of accreditation, and this population should be considered ‘core hospital business’.

However, screening of cognitive impairment is highly variable in Australian hospitals. Lack of recognition of the problem then limits access by patients to prevention, minimisation and restorative interventions to reduce the impact and severity of the impairment on the individual’s quality of life.

Canberra Hospital was one of four national experimental study sites in 2017, but the whole-of-hospital approach implemented with a project officer and project funding has struggled to maintain unification since the end of the project (Yates et al 2018, Murray et al 2019).

This project will review the current cognitive assessments of people over the age of 65 admitted to hospital, with a view to improving understanding of the status quo to provide a basis for further health services quality of care improvement.

Proposed research methods

A point prevalence survey will be conducted using a single day to review all admissions over the age of 65, and when, where and how any cognitive screening or assessment was undertaken. The student would perform a document survey of available documentation relevant to the patient admissions for that day to identify any assessments or clinical documentation related to cognitive function or impairment.

Preferred study discipline being undertaken by the student

Nursing, but any accepted

Potential benefits to the student and to the department

The department and the hospital would benefit from data from the whole-of-hospital in order to

improve the design of cognitive impairment screening and intervention pathways. This would be of considerable benefit to the patients and community experiencing this distressing, and yet potentially modifiable disease, which is associated with increased length of stay, increased admission to residential aged care, increased costs of care, prolonged recovery times, reduced functional capacity, reductions in quality of life and increased mortality.

Findings from this study would directly inform the Cognitive Impairment Working Group, chaired by Sean Hambrook, and the EPIC rollout, which Chrysta Bridge is responsible for the Inpatient Clinical Documentation as Digital Health Record Analyst.

The student would benefit from engaging with implementation and translation of research aspects in creating changes in practice. The student would gain data collection skills, increased knowledge of the clinical complexity of care for older people, and in particular knowledge regarding the clinical complexity of cognitive impairment.

Department within ACT Health Directorate / Canberra Health Services where the student will be based

Rehabilitation, Aged and Community Services

Please submit form to preclinical.research@act.gov.au

Murray, M. E., Wong Shee, A., West, E., Morvell, M., Theobald, M., Versace, V., & Yates, M. (2019). Impact of the Dementia Care in Hospitals Program on acute hospital staff satisfaction. *BMC health services research*, 19(1), 680. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-019-4489-z>

Yates M, Watts JJ, Bail K, Mohebbi M, MacDermott S, Jebramek JC, Brodaty H. Evaluating the Impact of the Dementia Care in Hospitals Program (DCHP) on Hospital-Acquired Complications: Study Protocol. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2018; 15(9):1878. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15091878>