Effectiveness of the 'spark of life' dementia care program

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Aim: The primary aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the 'Spark of Life' (SOL) program (a person-centered dementia care program) in improving outcomes for people with dementia and their carers. To date there has been no empirical research to evaluate the impact of this program on persons with dementia. The specific aims of the current study are to assess the effect of the SOL Program on:

(1) Quality of life, satisfaction and person specific clinical outcomes for people with dementia (mild to moderate).
(2) Caregiving satisfaction and approaches to dementia care for nurse caregivers.
(3) Families'/Relatives' perceptions of care (satisfaction with care) and perceptions of the quality of life for their loved one with dementia.

Method: The research design utilises multiple single-subject (small n) designs. The inclusion of multiple and heterogeneous study participants in which a complex intrasubject design is repeated increases the confidence that can be placed in inferences made about the intervention. The basic design is a time series for a single person(s) and a single outcome, with a single time of intervention.

Results: Data analysis utilizes a combination of statistical and visual inspection methods. Continuous assessment (across 8–10 months) of outcome variables at baseline and post-intervention will be presented. Measurement outcomes include the Dementia Quality of Life Instrument (DQOL), Approaches to Dementia Questionnaire (ADQ), the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire and the Quality of life in Alzheimer's Disease (QOL-AD). Results for clinical outcome measures including behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia, cognition, function and medications will also be presented.

Conclusion: Optimizing outcomes for people with dementia is complex given the individual and idiosyncratic manifestations of the dementia syndrome. The current research makes a significant contribution by expanding the literature on outcomes research for people with dementia, their nursing home caregivers and families.

Resilience, selective optimisation and compensation (SOC), and well-being in community dwelling older adults

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Aim: The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between resilience and subjective well-being in a sample of older Australians living independently in a regional community. The findings of previous research have been inferred upon older age groups, often without sufficient evidence to suggest validity or relevance. Of particular concern are the effects that both gender and previous life stressors may have on resilience in older adults. The question of how these might interact with ageing remains unanswered. This study explores the influence of gender and life stress on resilience for participants in the young-old, old-old, and oldest-old sub-groups. The relative contributions of resilience and the selective optimization with compensation model of ageing as predictors of subjective well-being in later life are also explored.

Method: Convenience and snowball sampling methods were used to recruit 80 independent, community-dwelling participants aged 65 years and over. Demographic items including questions about positive and negative life events and the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, Satisfaction With Life Scale, the short version of the SOC Questionnaire and the Late-Life Function and Disability Instrument were interviewer-administered to all participants.

Results: The psychometric properties of the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale are presented and discussed in relation to an overall understanding of resilience and subjective well-being in later life. The effects of gender and life stress on resilience are presented for participants in the young-old, old-old, and oldest-old sub-groups. The relative contributions of resilience and the selective optimization with compensation model of ageing as predictors of subjective well-being in later life are also assessed.

Conclusion: This study contributes to research on factors associated with resilience and well-being in Australia's ageing population. The results are discussed in relation to understanding factors which lead to positive and successful ageing.

Connecting frail, elderly, marginalised population to an evidence-based falls prevention program "STEPPING ON"

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Aim: To implement a cognitive-behavioural Falls Prevention Program to a financially and socially-disadvantaged ageing population in a large inner-city Department of Housing Development.

Method: Staff from the St Vincent's Community Health Service implemented the Stepping On Community Based Falls Prevention program, by initially focussing on a community-development approach. This involved a number