

The second trial is underway in the Glen Innes Area and involves all HACC services cooperating in an unprecedented way. Data has been collected about clients involved in the trial that includes total fees currently paid for all services and specific detail regarding their financial situation. This has already given a unique insight into which services are in reality collecting the majority of fees and also, how much disposable income clients have left to pay for essentials such as food, bills and social activities.

Conclusion: The findings from both these trials will give both DADHC and the region a framework for how to overcome issues that services are having with fees and barriers of access for clients.

Are attitudes toward older workers different from general attitudes toward older people?

Helmes, E, Campbell, A

James Cook University, Townsville, QLD

Background: Research over several decades has shown that attitudes toward older adults are negative. Attitude measurement clearly depends upon the method and measures that are used, as such attitudes are likely sensitive to demand characteristics and influences such as social desirability. Administration formats other than the traditional paper-and-pencil method may therefore be more likely to show different results. Attitudes toward older adults in general have been more commonly explored than attitudes toward older workers. Here we contrast differences in expressed attitudes between the conventional paper-and-pencil format and the more confidential format of internet-based administration to evaluate whether attitudes toward older workers are more or less sensitive to the differences in administration format.

Methods: Four scales used to assess attitudes toward older workers were administered together with an attitude scale for older adults in general that gives two scores to 60 university undergraduates (68% female, mean age 24.3 years, $SD = 8.51$) who responded using both paper-and-pencil format and an internet-based format. The administrations were approximately 4 days apart in counter-balanced order. Standard effect sizes were calculated using the pooled variance estimate for each measure to determine if effects were different for attitudes toward older workers than for adults in general.

Results: Four scales, three for attitudes toward older workers and one for older adults in general, showed significant differences across the response formats, with more negative attitudes expressed with the internet-based format in all cases. Effect sizes for the scales of attitudes toward older workers were more than twice as large as those for attitudes toward older adults in general.

Conclusions: The difference in format implied greater confidentiality of attitudes in the internet-based that allowed more negative attitudes to be expressed. Attitudes toward older workers appear more negative than attitudes toward older adults in general.

Early detection and management of pain in older people in the acute care setting: An innovative approach to practice change

Higgins, I¹, Hodson, F², Phelan, C², Douglas, J², Ritchard, L², Summons, P¹, Bruce, D², Mabbott, G², Dobson, P²

¹University of Newcastle, Callaghan, NSW, ²John Hunter Hospital, Hunter New England Health, Newcastle, NSW

Issues: Elderly people characteristically under-report their pain and some regard pain as a normal part of growing old. Recent research notes that hospitalised patients continue to experience unacceptable levels of pain (Potter *et al.*, 2003). Research also highlights that assessment of pain by healthcare staff is rarely documented and this may be a contributor to poor pain management. Many health care organisations fail to make pain management part of their core business (NICS, 2003) and health care professionals outside specialist pain services do not assess or document pain (NICS, 2003).

Discussion: The project team developed, implemented and evaluated a multidisciplinary pain education program designed specifically for older adult patients. The education program included education outlining pain assessment and management for older people. The program was supplemented with promotional media including distinctive signage "Targeting pain". Following the education program staff members were encouraged to wear badges with a logo: "Pain? Let me know". Prior to commencing the project, an audit of patient's notes was conducted in the ward and repeated later. Patients were surveyed and face-to-face interviews were conducted with four patients to explore experiences and satisfaction. A focus group was also conducted with health staff in order to explore perceptions of the approach used.

Conclusion: Outcomes resulted in:

- increase in the number of patients assessed for pain
- increase in the number of people receiving analgesia
- increased capacity amongst staff in relation to pain management
- enhanced collaboration between medical, nursing and allied staff
- Increased patient and staff satisfaction with care received and given
- Insight into the efficacy of promotional media

References:

- Managing acute and cancer pain in hospitalized patients. *National Institute of Clinical Studies*, Australia, 2003.
Potter V., Wiseman C., Dunn S., & Boyle F (2003) Patient barriers to optimal cancer pain control. *Psycho-oncology*, 12: 153–160.