
Working with community to improve dementia outcomes

2013 PHC RESEARCH CONFERENCE: PAPER ABSTRACT

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Aims & rationale/Objectives

To describe general practitioner (GP) and community dementia literacy and how this knowledge may be used to reduce dementia risk factors and provide a timely diagnosis that can improve quality of life.

Methods

A review of published literature on community dementia literacy provides a background for this study where adult patients and GPs respond to questionnaires exploring their roles in diagnosis and prevention of dementia.

Findings

Most people (61%) associate dementia with memory loss and 46% consider there is a stigma to the diagnosis. They learn about dementia from acquaintances (31%) and the media (33%) but seldom from their doctor (1%). However, they expect their doctor to know about dementia and provide help should they be diagnosed with the condition. Many (37%) have memory concerns but only 6% were offered a memory test, despite 52% being receptive to having one. Most people (78%) want to learn more about preventing dementia and 93% would like to be told the diagnosis should they have the condition.

Implications

Health literacy can assist help seeking behavior. However, many health professionals feel nothing can be done for people with dementia despite strong evidence that referral to support agencies can improve quality of life. Healthy ageing benefits from reduction of risk factors for illness such as diabetes and heart disease. Although dementia shares many similar risk factors, unlike these treatable conditions, dementia once started does not stop. Effective prevention must start early as the disease may begin many years

before symptoms appear.

Presentation type

Paper

Session theme

Dementia

Webcast



00:13:04

Citation

Millard F, Baune B, Kennedy L, Gunnarsson R. (2013). Working with community to improve dementia outcomes. In: 2013 Primary Health Care Research Conference: Program & Abstracts. Primary Health Care Research and Information Service, Australia. phcris.org.au/conference/abstract/7721

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