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Stigma and language: the future

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Stigma and language: the future

Abstract

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STIGMA AND LANGUAGE: THE FUTURE

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Objectives: Stigma and disrespectful language affects more than just well-being and quality of life for people with dementia and their families (Alzheimer's Australia 2014, ADI 2012). This presentation will provide the results of a literature review of the language used in the dementia literature and the impact on stigma. Language, inclusion and providing dementia friendly communities are important in the reduction of stigma, and until these change, stigma will continue to be a considerable burden on people with dementia (Garand, Lingler, Conner & Dew 2009; Vincent 2014). Stigma is still a salient feature of the experience of people with dementia, and the existence of stigma within the literature exacerbates the impact of stigma further. Furthermore, the stigma literature is focused on the effect or feeling of stigma, not from the perspective of the person with dementia but from the carer's viewpoint, inaccurately claiming to understand stigma from the point of view of people with dementia. This knowledge or experience cannot be ignored as not including people with dementia in research not only further stigmatises, but hinders the validity of the research. Stigma is also intensified by the use of incorrect information and inappropriate and offensive language used to describe people with dementia. Stigma within the literature, towards the very cohort group it aims to help, may also be partly to blame for poor knowledge translation, and it is timely for researchers to now refer to the language guidelines for dementia. In closing, I will outline the Alzheimer's Australia 2014 Dementia Language Guidelines, with rationale provided by people with dementia for the importance of their use not only in the community and health care sector, but by the media and by researchers.

Disclosure of Interest: None Declared

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