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Nurse practitioner led E-memory clinics: Evaluation of the integrated living Australia, a digital memory wellness program

Helga Merl

Integrated living, Australia

In Australia, the gap between discussing symptoms with the GP and diagnosis of Dementia is 3 years. The delay to diagnosis is longer in rural and remote communities with limited access to specialists. Currently, 280000 Australians remain undiagnosed and unable to access vital treatments, information and support services with negative repercussions for all involved. Integrated living Australia has addressed this issue through an innovative Memory Wellness clinic and program led by the Nurse Practitioner (NP). This program was a finalist in the 2016 and 2017 Asia Pacific Aged Care Awards for best new dementia program and innovation of the year. The model is E-Health enabled e.g., Apps installed to iPad, give the NP access to best practice dementia care including cognitive assessment. Videocase conference identifies those at risk of dementia and consumers are then set on the localized diagnosis and management pathway. All clinic consumers have access to the memory wellness program. In remote communities these programs are based on a hub model with consumers linked via video conference to the NP and guest speakers. iPads and Misfits are available to build the capacity of consumers to self-manage e.g., brain training apps. A partnership with the University of Tasmania has enabled research of the dual aims of the memory wellness clinic and program such as improve timely and early diagnosis of dementia and improve health literacy about lifestyle modifications that reduce risk, provide motivation and support for behavior change amongst older persons. Findings from the research will be highlighted including the programs ability for timely diagnose of dementia and improving the cognition of participating older persons.

Biography

Helga Merl is a Nurse Practitioner Clinical Services Manager with integratedliving, Australia and has a passion for memory wellness and dementia care. She also co-ordinates the aged care postgraduate courses and the postgraduate Primary health care and chronic and complex courses for the faculties of Nursing & Midwifery, Public Health and Medicine at the University of Newcastle.

hmerl@integratedliving.org.au

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