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Transforming the experience for people with dementia in the acute hospital

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We are a small team of nurses working at one of the biggest NHS Trusts in the UK. Our remit is to support people with dementia who are using our acute hospital services at Imperial that comprises 25% of our inpatients. Research has shown that patients with dementia still have poorer outcomes after admission, including longer length of stay, higher mortality rates and higher rates of institutionalization. In 2014, we wrote an ambitious dementia strategy, with the intention of transforming the way in which our patients experience their hospital admission by addressing not only their clinical needs, but also emotional, societal, environmental and social needs. In two years, we have achieved a significant amount using the strategy to drive us and the culture of our organization has changed. The plan has included personalizing care with What Matters To Me and partnership working with Carers by allowing them free access to the person using Carer's Passports. To ease distress, staff is trained to use PAINAD, a dementia specific assessment tool and we use aromatherapy and massage. We have developed a standalone nutrition and hydration project which has had significant positive clinical outcomes. We have trained 5000 members of staff in person-centered care and have also employed a person with dementia to address the stigma of having dementia directly with our staff. We work in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society to using more than 30 volunteers on the wards. We use technology to help support meaningful activity in clinical areas with Digital Reminiscence Software.

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