Support at Home: Interventions to Enhance Life in Dementia (SHIELD) – evidence, development and evaluation of complex interventions

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Plain English summary

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Dementia has an enormous social and economic impact and there is an urgent need to improve care. This research programme aims to improve the quality of life of people with dementia and their carers, and to help support people at home. Cognitive stimulation therapy (CST), which involves people with dementia participating in mentally simulating games and other activities in groups, is beneficial for cognition and quality of life as well as being good value for money. Our 6-month clinical trial of continued weekly CST found that it improved quality of life and was good value. Many staff will run CST groups following a 1-day training course. The Carer Supporter Programme (CSP) involves ex-carers of people with dementia helping new carers with support and information. In a large clinical trial for people with dementia and their carers, we evaluated the CSP and a reminiscence programme. Both the CSP and the reminiscence programme helped to improve the quality of life of people with dementia but no benefits were noted for family carers. The reminiscence programme groups were very costly to run and may not be value for money. Home treatment teams may reduce hospital admissions for people with dementia. Based on reviewing the research evidence and consultations with people with dementia, family carers and staff, we have developed and field-tested a home treatment protocol to help clinical teams manage crises and support people with dementia at home. Our results suggest that care for people with dementia and their carers can be improved.
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