

Understanding and improving experiences of care in hospital for people living with dementia, their carers and staff: three systematic reviews

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Plain English summary

Improving hospital care for people with dementia

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Plain English summary

For people living with dementia, being in hospital can be confusing, challenging and overwhelming. This can have a lasting effect on their health and well-being. There is a need to improve the experience of care in hospital of people living with dementia.

This report assessed the research that has already been carried out on this topic and explored:

1. what the experiences of care are for people living with dementia in hospital, their families and the staff caring for them
2. whether or not approaches to improve the experience of hospital care for people living with dementia work, and how much they cost
3. what people who have been involved in such approaches think about them.

We found 96 studies describing experience of care or approaches to improve it. These studies found that people living with dementia, and their families, feel that care does not always meet their needs, which can heighten their distress. Hospital staff are aware that people living with dementia will benefit from a more person-centred approach to care, but they feel that they cannot always provide this because of lack of time, pressures of ward routines, and hospital targets.

Some approaches designed to improve experience of care have had positive results. For example, activity programmes such as music or art-making on wards have helped improve the mood of people living with dementia. Training has helped staff feel more confident in providing more person-centred care. Many studies, however, were not very well designed or were carried out very differently, which meant that it was hard to compare studies.

Overall, this report shows that the more staff can be supported to deliver person-centred care, and the more routine it becomes, the better the experience of care for everyone. Twelve areas of changes to practice to improve experience of care are proposed.

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This report

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