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MacAndrew, Margaret, Beattie, Elizabeth, Fielding, Elaine, Wyles, Catherine, Kolanowski, Ann, & Van Haitsma, Kimberly (2018)

A comparison of two interventions for people with severe dementia who wander: Issues and Insights. In

NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research (NNIDR) Australian Dementia Forum 2019, 2019-06-13 - 2019-06-14, Hobart, Australia, AUS.

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A Comparison Of Two Interventions For People With Severe Dementia Who Wander: Issues And Insights

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Background

- Wandering is a common behaviour exhibited by Long Term Care (LTC) residents with dementia.
- Walking that goes beyond safe limits is known as 'risky wandering'[1].
- Risky wandering is linked with adverse outcomes including unintended weight loss, fatigue, injury from falls, resident-toresident violence, becoming lost and death [2].
- Non-pharmacological interventions are recommended as the first line approach to managing wandering [3]. However, there is limited evidence and few guidelines for carers and clinicians to use [4].

Inclusion criteria

A resident >3 months, independently ambulant, severe dementia diagnosis, exhibit risky wandering (frequent and repetitive wandering) with boundary transgression i.e. enter out of bounds/hazardous areas).

Intervention development

The two interventions were developed after considering: 1) recommendations from family/professional carers and people with dementia about interventions that would be meaningful; 2) current evidence related to why wandering occurs; and 3) evidence of the efficacy of non-pharmacological interventions to manage wandering in LTC.

Intervention 1:

Supervised Walking Program (SWP)

Intervention 2:

Listening to Preferred Music Program (LPMP)

• To address this gap, the feasibility of using two behavioural interventions were trialled.

Project aims

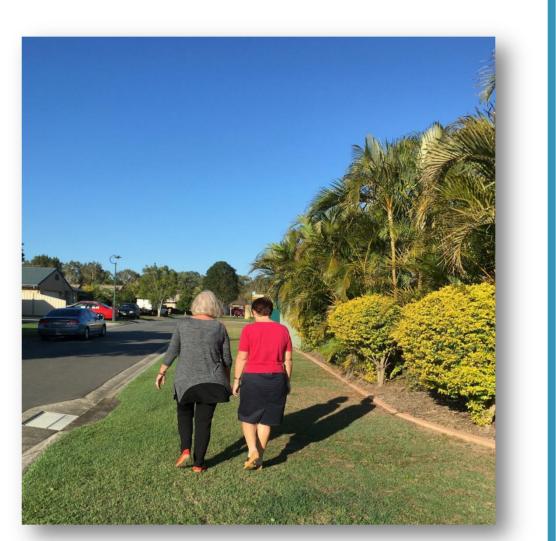
- 1. To explore the feasibility of using the *Safe Walking Program* (SWP) and the Listening to Preferred Music Program (LPMP) with LTC residents with severe dementia who exhibit risky wandering.
- 2. To explore staff and family perceptions of the acceptability and sustainability of the programs in LTC

Participants

Safe Walking Program: Seven residents from two LTCs Listening to Preferred Music Program: Ten residents from two LTCs

Participants were invited to go for a daily 30 minute walk, outside the care facility (when practical), 30 minutes before their unique peak activity period (most active 2 hours between 7am and 7pm).

The walks were conducted 1:1 with a trained member of staff or research team member. The SWP was trialled for **3 weeks**.



Participants were invited to **listen to** music (chosen for them by their family members) for **20** minutes per day for three weeks, under two conditions: a) 30 minutes before peak activity periods; b) at a random time NOT before peak activity periods.

Music was played on head phones or a speaker. Participants sat in a suitable quiet room such as their bedroom.

Results

Feasibility of interventions

Feasibility data showed that while both interventions were feasible, more SWP interventions commenced and were completed suggesting SWP was more acceptable to participants.

Staff and family perceptions of acceptability and sustainability

Post-intervention interviews with participants' care staff (N=31) and family members (N=4) were **generally positive** with most believing each program was beneficial although the response was highly individual. Similar modifications were suggested for both programs.

Feasibility	SWP (n = 7)	LPMP (n=10)
Treatment fidelity		
Scheduled interventions	105	150
Total interventions	86 (80%)	92 (61%)
commenced	12.3	9.2
Mean interventions commenced		
Received full dose	78 (91%)	55 (60%)
Mean dose (minutes)	29.27	16.19
Reasons for deviation from prot	ocol	
Intervention did not	19 (20%)	58 (39%)
commence	5 (26%)	37 (64%)
Participant refusal	4 (21%)	-
Fatigue	3 (16%)	-
Participant reported illness	3 (16%)	-
Staff reported illness	3 (16%)	12 (21%)
Participant asleep	1 (5%)	-
Interventionist unavailable	-	9 (15%)
Participant unavailable		
Incomplete intervention	8 (9%)	37 (40%)
Fatigue	4 (50%)	-
Desire to return home	2 (25%)	-
Pain	2 (25%)	-
Removed headphones	-	20 (54%)
Walked away from speaker	-	12 (32%)
Request to cease	-	5 (14%)
Alternate route taken	18 (21%)	
Participant preference	6 (33%)	_
Fatigue (walk indoors)	3 (17%)	_
Refusal to walk outdoors	3 (17%)	-
New hazards e.g. road works	4 (22%)	-
Health concerns (walk indoors)	2 (11%)	-
Alternate room used	-	26 (28%)

Supervised Walking

- Participants seemed calmer, happier, more communicative and social, and less resistive to care
- Walking with the participants **helped staff to** build rapport
- Walking outside **provided stimulation**
- Continued to walk more than other residents but walked in more public areas
- Participant more fatigued → **improved sleep**

Participants and staff experienced positive outcomes

Listening to Preferred Music

- Participants appeared to **enjoy the activity**
- Participants were **calmer** during the program and therefore less resistive to care decreasing staff workload
- Provided participants with **something to** look forward to
- Some participants **seemed to walk less**
- The program didn't cause additional problems
- One participant was **more aggressive**
- For some participants the program did not seem to effect the **amount of walking they** did or where they walked.
- Staff wanted to be more involved in the intervention delivery

Modifications recommended:

- A **dedicated member of staff** should take responsibility for the program
- Have a **quiet room** dedicated to **group music sessions** instead of individual sessions

• Walking outdoors when hot associated with some participants becoming unwell

- Some participants were **very fatigued** after a walk becoming more resistive to care or aggressive in the evening
- Strict timing of the walk and use of care staff to supervise it **impacted care routines**

Modifications recommended:

- Flexible times for participant walks
- Use volunteers and families to lead walks
- Group walks at set times e.g. in the afternoon

Program should continue with modifications due to perceived

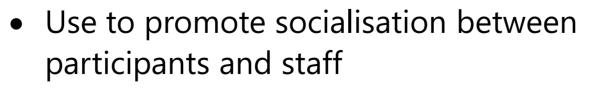
Some negative

outcomes were

experienced

References

- 1. Algase, D., et al., Mapping the maze of terms and definitions in dementia-related wandering. Aging & Mental Health, 2007. 11(6): p. 686-698.
- 2. Algase, D., E. Beattie, and G. Son, Wandering, adverse outcomes, and caregiver strategies. 2004, National Institute of Nursing Research.
- Laver, K., et al., Clinical practice guidelines for dementia in Australia. Med J Aust, 2016. 204(5): p. 191-93.
- 4. Robinson, L., et al., A systematic literature review of the effectiveness of non-pharmacological interventions to prevent wandering in dementia and evaluation of the ethical implications and acceptability of their use. Health Technology Assessment (Winchester, England), 2006. 10(26): p. iii.





• Some would benefit from **listening to music** at set times e.g. after lunch or at bed time

Summary of findings across both interventions

Aspects of the programs that are promising

- Positive outcomes > negative outcomes
- Both programs were well tolerated but the SWP appeared to be more acceptable to the person with dementia
- Opportunity for participants to walk outside the care facility and listen to preferred music were both seen as positive elements of the protocols.

Directions for future research

Modifications to the protocol to trial:

Tailored approach interferes with care routines

→ **Flexible timing** of interventions.

Use of volunteers or activity officers to run programs. Conduct as group activities to reduce staff workloads.



Translating dementia research into practice

