

Filling the care quality innovation gap: Measuring consumers' perspectives on long-term aged care.

Development of a new quality-of-care measurement for industry by Flinders University, funded by the Cognitive Decline Partnership Centre

The problem

With the recent introduction of consumer-directed care in the Australian aged care sector, there is growing pressure for organisations to sustainably provide aged care residents with flexibility and choice in their care, as this can provide positive outcomes for residents. Previous research indicates that aspects of long-term care provision that are important to residents and their family members include the way that staff provide the care, respect for the individual as a person, the physical and social environment, and the level of autonomy given to individuals.

In order for long-term care facilities to meet the needs and expectations of residents and their family member carers, they need a practical method to evaluate consumers' experiences. In particular, there is a need for a questionnaire that measures quality of care, from the consumer's own perspective. The Consumer Choice Index – 6 Dimension (CCI-6D) questionnaire was designed to fill this gap. The CCI-6D has been developed in conjunction with consumers to evaluate the quality of care received, and the extent of flexibility and choice, in long-term care facilities from a consumer perspective.





Study snapshot

The (CCI-6D) measures six key characteristics of good quality care from the consumer's perspective, which are the extent to which:

- (a) formal caregivers are able to spend enough time attending to individual's needs;
- (b) the shared spaces of the facility are home-like and non-institutional;
- (c) the individual rooms of the facility are home-like and non-institutional;
- (d) there is choice in access to outside and gardens;
- (e) there is access to meaningful activities individualised for the person; and
- (f) there is flexibility in the time that care activities are undertaken.

The results

The new CCI-6D questionnaire compared as expected with similar results obtained from the other related questionnaires that were undertaken on quality of life, care quality and physical environment of care facilities. This indicates that the CCI-6D accurately measures quality of care and can evaluate quality of care from the perspective of consumers in aged care facilities. The CCI-6D included information on aspects that determine care quality such as amount of care time, the home-like characteristics of shared spaces and residents' own rooms, the ability to access outside space and gardens, provision of meaningful activities, and flexibility in care routines.

Opportunities for consumer input into residential care improvements

The CCI-6D can be used to evaluate the effect of quality improvement activities or to provide an organisation with information on how its residents are assessing the facility in key areas.