

GP Dementia Awareness Training



Overview

Living Well with Dementia: a National Dementia Strategy was published by the Department of Health (DH) in February 2009. The implementation plan contained five strategic priority objectives, including 'Good quality early diagnosis and intervention for all'.

It is recognised that only a third of GPs feel that they have adequate training in dementia and, in response to this issue, a methodology for dementia awareness training was developed through the EVIDEM-ED programme by University College London. This comprises a one-hour facilitated session for all staff of a GP practice followed by the production of an Educational Prescription that addresses the specific gaps in their knowledge which are identified through the session.



Project Aims and Methods

The Aim of the GP Dementia Awareness Project was to implement the EVIDEM-ED methodology with a defined group of GPs within the Thames Valley in order to:

- Assess ease of implementation.
- Identify the barriers that would need to be overcome should it be decided to roll out the methodology on a larger scale.
- Test out the means to overcome barriers and provide feedback on the success, or not, of these means.

The method adopted was to involve all GP practices in two Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), regardless of whether or not the practice had previously expressed an interest in improving practice in relation to the early diagnosis of dementia. The purpose of doing this was to ensure the study was not skewed towards implementation in sites which might inherently be more amenable to the proposed methodology.

Findings

- The fact that 85% of practices agreed to run sessions demonstrates that the EVIDEM-ED methodology is relatively easy to implement at scale.
- The approach that was used to encourage take-up of this initiative by practices evolved throughout the project and we recommend a number of specific changes to the methodology to make a large scale roll out more straightforward.
- The work carried out uncovered aspects of attitudes to dementia in the primary care teams which are worthy of note. From some of the feedback received while trying to book sessions and from attempts to evaluate the success of the project in terms of changes to practice, it seems there is considerable resistance in some practices to effecting real change on the ground as a result of this approach. We question whether this methodology, as a stand-alone intervention, is sufficient to change deeply held clinical views on the value of an earlier diagnosis of dementia.



Recommendation

Our recommendation is that an attempt is made to deliver the EVIDEM-ED methodology to a further CCG using an accelerated and phased approach, incorporating the changes that resulted from our implementation. At the same time, the methodology needs to be combined with a more structured attempt to align increased diagnosis to other levers of change such as commissioning plans and local pathway changes.

Working with Thames Valley HIEC

This project was carried out by the HIEC team, and supported by funding from NHS South of England. We can help you by:

- **Rolling out the methodology in your area to speed up achieving “good quality early diagnosis and intervention for all”.**
- **Supporting your local planned changes to clinical practice with high quality project management.**
- **Sharing the full report of our GP Dementia Awareness Training project with you.**

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