



Care

Creating resources to educate on risks vs rewards of urinary incontinence medications



What is the focus of the research?

Designing evidence-based resources that help people make informed decisions around the risks and benefits of using medication to manage urinary incontinence.



Why is this important?

Urinary incontinence is a distressing and stigmatised condition that significantly reduces a person's quality of life. It can lead to embarrassment, social isolation, skin problems and low self-esteem.

Unfortunately, two-thirds of people living with dementia in residential aged care experience multiple episodes a day. Medication is commonly used to manage urinary incontinence, but it can increase cognitive impairment and risk of death.

Despite the prevalence of urinary incontinence and the potential dangers associated with medications, there are no resources that support people and healthcare professionals to make informed decisions about starting, monitoring and stopping medication.

Dr Cross will address this critical gap by co-designing evidence-based resources with people, their families and healthcare professionals who work in aged care. These resources will be compliant with Australia's Aged Care Quality Standards and the 2022 Guiding Principles for Medication Management in Residential Aged Care Facilities.

Working in conjunction with aged-care pharmacists, Dr Cross will trial the resources in residential aged care, to ensure they're acceptable and promote safe and effective continence care.



How will it happen?

Stage 1: hold focus groups and conduct interviews with stakeholders involved in managing incontinence in residential aged care (people with dementia, caregivers, pharmacists, nurses and aged-care prescribers), to capture different perspectives on what information is needed to make informed decisions.

Stage 2: draft an outline of the resources, based on the results of stage one and available research evidence. Hold workshops with stakeholders to discuss, review and refine the resources, to ensure they're comprehensive, effective and user-friendly.

Stage 3: 10 residential aged-care pharmacists to implement the resources to educate and support decision-making around medication. Researchers to collect data and assess resource uptake, usability, effectiveness, impact on decision-making, and barriers and facilitators to implementation.



What will it mean for people with dementia?

- Greater understanding of the medications used to manage urinary incontinence.
- Resources to support informed, shared decision-making.
- Improved medication use and continence care.

What is co-design?

Co-design in research is when researchers and the people who are affected by the research work together to develop ideas, projects, or solutions. Their perspectives and insights are valued and included, so that the final outcomes are relevant, useful and effective for everyone involved.



Who's undertaking the research?

Dr Amanda Cross, Monash University

Dr Cross is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Medicine Use and Safety within Monash University's Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. She is also a practicing pharmacist. Dr Cross is passionate about medication safety; her clinical and research work both focus on reducing medication-related harm in older adults living with cognitive impairment or dementia.

The title of Dr Cross's project is *Empowering consumers and healthcare professionals to make evidence-based, informed decisions regarding the pharmacological management of urinary incontinence for people living with dementia.*

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