

Key messages

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eLearning Dementia Education Resource for GPs and Practice Nurses

What is it?

An *eLearning Dementia Education Resource for GPs and Practice Nurses* is now available New Zealand-wide and free of charge www.goodfellowunit.org/courses/dementia

This new resource aims to support people to live well with dementia. It is designed to build confidence, competence and consistency in assessing, diagnosing and managing mild cognitive impairment and dementia in primary care. Information on 17 dementia-related topics is included, such as the roles of primary and secondary care, cultural considerations, legal implications, care plans, community support, patient viewpoints and tips from GPs.

The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners has accredited the resource for five MOPS points (maintenance of professional standards) or five CPD points (continuing professional development).

The *eLearning Dementia Education Resource for GPs and Practice Nurses* is a collaboration between primary, secondary and tertiary care providers, Alzheimers NZ and dementia organisations. It is based on the latest dementia research and best practice principles. The four regional health alliances of New Zealand have supported the development, which has involved health staff, patients and families from across New Zealand.

Why was this resource developed?

Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) and dementia can be effectively diagnosed and managed in primary care:

- Refer to the attached Alzheimers NZ Fact Sheet for incidence, prevalence and cost facts.
- Dementia is a chronic, progressive condition.
- Most people with dementia live at home.
- The first signs of dementia usually become apparent in the primary care setting.
- The consequences of undiagnosed dementia include:
 - symptom burden for the person, inclusive of higher rates of falls and injury
 - family/whānau carer stress
 - higher rates of hospitalisation or admissions to aged residential care.
- The advantages of timely diagnosis of dementia include:
 - the person with dementia and their family/whānau carer can live well at home
 - people with dementia and their family/whānau carers receive information and education, and are better supported to anticipate and manage any challenges that may arise.
- There is increasing evidence that early adoption of risk reduction factors may delay the onset of dementia.

Where is the NZ evidence for primary care management of MCI and typical dementia?

An evaluation of the Waitemata DHB pilot of GPs and practice nurses assessing, diagnosing and managing MCI and typical dementia was conducted by The University of Auckland's Department of Geriatric Medicine. It showed that the model of care is safe, and:

- is supported by GPs and their practice staff
- can improve the confidence and competence of primary care staff and the consistency of care for people with MCI or dementia
- can improve the quality of life for the people with MCI or dementia
- can improve the quality of life for family/whānau carers
- integrates care services across the health continuum, including primary, secondary, tertiary care and NGOs.