



Agents of Change

Creating National Quality Collaboratives to improve dementia care

Newsletter #4

Issue 4, December 2018

Welcome

Welcome to December! The research team have been reflecting on what an amazing year it has been for the Agents of Change project. We have finalised our Collaboratives, with clinicians from 32 sites across Australia. The clinicians bring an incredible array of skills and experience, and they have been incredibly dedicated to the project so far.

We're even more excited to look ahead to 2019. We will see our clinicians develop their own unique quality improvement plans and gain feedback from our clinical, consumer, and quality improvement experts. Best of all, we will watch them to implement their plans and make tangible improvements to the services they provide to people with dementia and their supporters. What a year it will be!

- Dr Kate Laver, project lead

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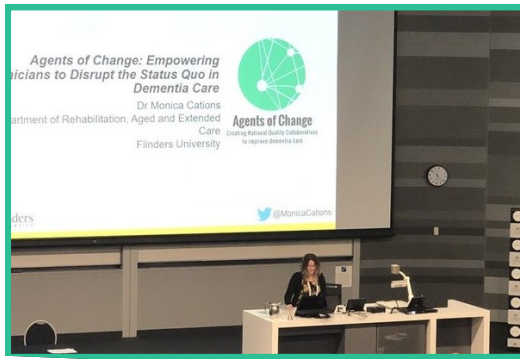
Progress update

The Agents of Change project is progressing well. Our online training package (or 'Massive Open Online Course', MOOC) is now open for our implementation clinicians to complete. The MOOC takes the clinicians through the steps of developing their own quality improvement plan, including assessing their stakeholders and developing strategies to ready their organisation for change. We are pleased to see most clinicians have started to work their way through the package.

	Nov 2017	Mar 2018	Jun 2018	Aug 2018	Oct 2018	Apr 2019	Dec 2019
Ethics approval	X						
Implementation clinician recruitment		X					
Data collection begins			X				
Start up meeting				X			
Training package opens					X		
Implementation of plans						●	
Results dissemination							●

● = Expected, X = Completed

The research team have also been busy talking about the project at conferences around the country. We have talked presented to enthusiastic audiences at the **Cognitive Decline Partnership Centre Annual Conference** in Canberra, the **Australian Association of Gerontology Annual Conference** in Melbourne, the **Leading Aged Services Australia National Congress** in Adelaide, and the **National Health and Medical Research Centre Knowledge Translation Symposium** in Sydney (see a photo of Monica speaking at this event above).



We have noticed that the Agents of Change project is unique in its use of evidence-based implementation strategies to directly improve adherence to the Clinical Guidelines for Dementia Care in Australia. Audiences have remarked at the great potential for our implementation clinicians to make significant improvements to the lives of people with dementia and their families and friends across Australia. Our clinicians have much to be proud of and excited for!

Meet the team—Gorjana Radisic



In each edition of our newsletter, we will introduce you to a new member of the Agents of Change team. Next up is Gorjana Radisic:

"I am a Research Associate for the Agents of Change project and my role is to assist the team with recruitment, ethics requirements, data collection, participant engagement, online learning and other project management. My background is in biomedical science and public health.

I have accumulated over 15 years of experience in several research fields, ranging from immunology and virology to cancer prevention and most recently dementia care.

Prior to joining the Agents of Change team, I was actively involved in applied research and evaluation in the field of cancer control for several years, where I was undertaking a range of research activities to reduce the impact of cancer. I am also a casual tutor in Human Biology at the University of Adelaide.

I am excited to be part of a great team with a strong desire to optimise health outcomes. Evidence based recommendations augmented by implementation of appropriate strategies can lead to real benefits for patients and their carers."

Implementation Clinician Spotlight

We will be introducing you to our implementation clinicians in each issue of our Newsletter. Let's start with Kerri-Ann Vladcoff from the Northern Territory, and Karen Shepherd from New South Wales.

Kerri-Ann Vladcoff — Top End Health Service (Occupational Therapy Collaborative)

Tell us about yourself

My name is Kerri-Anne Vladcoff and I am an occupational therapist working within the Top End Health Services (TEHS), based in Darwin in the Aged Care Unit. My current role is as an ACAT Assessor and I thoroughly love the challenges and rewards that the position offers. In conjunction to working in ACAT, over the past 9 months I have introduced and overseen the implementation of a cognitive management tool (called the MAXCOG), developed for people with early stage dementia or mild cognitive impairment.



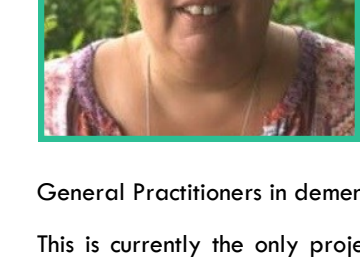
Why did you choose to join Agents of Change?

I decided to join the project because I was seeking professional support to undertake a formal evaluation of the MAXCOG. I also wanted to meet other like minded health professionals who were wanting to create positive and achievable changes to improve the care of people living with memory loss or dementia. Undertaking a study that was hosted by Flinders University was also very appealing to me because Top End Health Service has strong affiliations with Flinders. I was also very satisfied with the high standards of academic and educational care that Flinders University gave me during previous post graduate studies that I had completed.

How has your experience been so far?

Since joining the Agents of Change collaborative, I have felt an increased sense of control and motivation with my role of implementing cognitive rehabilitation within the Aged Care Unit. The support and teachings provided by The Agents of Change team, as well as the on line modules and resources have been outstanding. I am really appreciative of the Agents of Change collaborative and believe that I have already begun to demonstrate improvements in my dementia care practice. I feel excited about the future opportunities that await me as I progress through the Agents of Change pathway.

Karen Shepherd — Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (Family Carers Collaborative)



Tell us about yourself

For the last 6 years I have worked as the Community/ Dementia Clinical Nurse Consultant with the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. Over the last 3 years as part of my role I have co-ordinated the Geriatrician in Practice Project (GIP). This involves a Geriatrician and myself visiting 11 local General Practices in the Shoalhaven area and conducting dementia assessments. This allows a patient centred approach for the patient and/or carer and enables us to upskill Practice Nurses and General Practitioners in dementia assessment, diagnosis and management.

This is currently the only project of its kind being conducted in Australia. Evaluation of the GIP Project has proved its success and it has been presented at local, national and international conferences as well as winning the Collaborative Team Award at the Quality and Innovation Awards in 2017.

Why did you choose to join Agents of Change?

The Agents of Change project appealed me as I often felt during the course of my work that I wasn't always able to address carers needs adequately. As Clinicians we tend to be very focused on the patient and their outcomes but with a dementia diagnosis the carer is just as significant as the patient.

I wanted the opportunity to find gaps in my work practices and look at strategies to adapt my practice to be more inclusive of the carer. The other thing that especially appealed to me was being a part of a national collaborative with other experts in dementia care. It really is a fantastic opportunity to be part of a national research project and to have the backing and support of the great Agents of Change team at Flinders University.

How has your experience been so far?

I was a little concerned at first that I would have trouble keeping up. But it hasn't been an issue at all as long as I stick to my policy of "a little bit, often"

The data sheets have really helped me reflect on my current practices. I am starting to see where the gaps exist in my current practices in relation to carers and I am already knocking around a few project ideas in my head.

The project team at Flinders have been fabulous and I really appreciate their accessibility and availability at all times. I have started working my way through the MOOC modules and am hoping to finish them off during the quieter period in January when we don't run clinics. I look forward to continuing the learning with everyone in 2019.

Contacting us over the holiday break

The Agents of Change team will be taking a break over the Christmas and New Year period. We will be out of the office from the end of the day on Friday 21 December until Tuesday 2 January. However, please still write to Monica at monica.cations@flinders.edu.au if you have any questions or concerns over this time.

Monica will then be taking off for an overseas holiday from January 3 to January 28— Gorjana will oversee the project during this time so feel free to contact her at gorjana.radisic@flinders.edu.au any time.

We wish all of our implementation clinicians, experts, investigators, and collaborators a happy and safe holiday period. We are so grateful to have had your participation and support for Agents of Change in 2018 and look forward to a wonderful 2019.



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