

# Research Directions

Office of Research Services

## ***Improving Decision-Making for Advanced Dementia***

Professor Esther Chang, the Nursing Family Health, Outcomes, Resilience, Capacity Building Evidence (N-FORCE) research group, is leading a team of researchers to improve the care of patients with dementia. This Department of Health and Ageing funded project will develop, implement, evaluate and promote sustainability of a decision-making framework for advanced dementia care.



The research will provide a decision-making framework of support that will include guidelines for nurses to enable them to assist people in residential aged care facilities. Four major symptoms will be targeted – pain, constipation, weight loss and agitation/confusion. These symptoms have been recognised as particularly reducing the quality of life of people with advanced dementia and as being difficult for the primary care providers to treat.

Clinical Nurse Consultants from the Sydney West Area Health Service will work collaboratively with specialist aged/dementia nurses to develop the framework. The framework will describe when to convene a case conference or seek specialist palliative care advice. An education program using a “train the trainer” model will be a key feature of this project. On completion the “trained” will, in turn, mentor and train other staff. The research will enhance nurses’ competence and confidence in providing care and improve symptom control for those being cared for, as well as improve communication with family members of those in residential aged facilities.

*Team members include: Ms Amanda Johnson, Professor John Daly and Associate Professor Patricia Davidson, working in partnership with Sydney West Area Health Service Primary Care and Community Health Network and the Blue Mountains Division of General Practice.*

**Project Title:** *Decision-Making frameworks in advanced dementia – links to improved care.*

Funding has been set at: \$247,476 over three years.

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