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## Memory clinics

**The key to providing assessment and diagnosis of memory problems?**

*Paulina Szymczyńska*

The rising prevalence of dementia observed on a global scale has drawn attention to the importance of an early diagnosis and intervention. Timely diagnosis can have a significant impact on slowing the progression of dementia and improving the quality of life of the individuals and their families. Various initiatives around dementia on both national and international levels have flagged



early diagnosis and management of dementia as a priority in healthcare provision. Memory clinics have been increasingly recognised as key to providing assessment and diagnosis of memory problems (Jolley and Moniz-Cook, 2009) and subsequent monitoring

of their treatment (Lindesay et al. 2002). The presence of a memory clinic has been shown to encourage early referrals and to facilitate access to post-diagnostic support (Cheung and Strachan, 2008).

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## Completed research projects

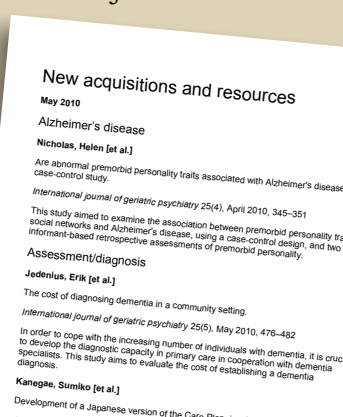
**Baseline assessment of information for people with dementia and their carers**

There is evidence that people with dementia and their carers do not receive sufficient, clear information about the condition, services available, what to expect as time goes on and where to get help. There is, however, every indication that better information at the right times can sustain care partnerships and enhance quality of life for both people with dementia and their carers.

## New acquisitions

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The DSDC's library houses one of the UK's largest collections of publications on dementia. It holds around 12,000 books, reports and journal articles on the care of people with dementia. [Download](#) our list of new acquisitions featuring topics ranging from assessment and diagnosis to younger people with dementia.



## Memory clinics (continued from page one)

### Research suggests memory clinics aid post-diagnostic support

Timely diagnosis has been shown to enable people with dementia and their carers to learn about the condition, prepare for its likely course, plan support, and obtain referrals for support services (Knopman et al. 2000; Leifer, 2003; Pratt and Wilkinson, 2001; Iliffe et al. 2003). From a medical and practical standpoint, timely dementia recognition allows the healthcare staff to facilitate workload, plan resources, prevent crises and subsequently reduce associated costs (Iliffe et al. 2003; Leifer, 2003; DeKosky, 2003). With evidence of medications preserving the individual's level of cognitive function, early diagnosis has become even more salient (Knopman et al. 2000; Leifer, 2003).



Early diagnosis and intervention have also been declared key areas of improvement in the English National Dementia Strategy with emphasis on good quality service for people with

dementia. With the recognition that memory clinics can play an important role in encouraging early referrals and access to support, they are becoming increasingly prevalent – particularly in rural areas.

Ideally, clinics should be situated within easy access of the local population and designed according to dementia-friendly guidelines (such as those outlined in the Dementia Services Development Centre Design Audit Tool (Cunningham et al. 2008)). Accessibility of memory clinics is crucial especially in rural areas where the proportion of older people is higher and yet access to medical resources and specialist services is limited (Logan-Sinclair and Davison, 2007). Rural memory clinics can make the diagnostic process more accessible and efficient by reducing

repeated travel and time to diagnosis.

The number of memory clinics, as well as the range of services they provide, has grown considerably in the last decade (Lindsay et al. 2002). According to White (2004), there were approximately 246 memory clinics in the UK in 2004 but there are no official NHS figures and no specific standards or set models relating to them. This allows for flexibility in developing services that will be in high demand in the next few decades. Recently, a service redesign project has been undertaken by NHS Highland in partnership with the Dementia Services Development Centre with an aim to create a network of memory clinics providing consistent high quality services throughout the Highland region.



Provision of accessible memory clinic services has the potential to increase population coverage and ensure that advantage is taken of local agencies in providing appropriate support to people with dementia and their carers (Jolley and Moniz-Cook, 2009).

With the growing interest in the role of memory clinics as gateways to dementia diagnosis and post-diagnostic support, there is a need for consolidation of initiatives aimed to encourage early recognition and improve understanding of dementia through public and specialist education, as well as to enhance the quality of life of the diagnosed individuals and their families.

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**Fitness Leader Award: Meaningful activity for people with dementia**

23/24 August & 20/21 September 2010

**DSDC, Stirling**



## New book titles



### Gilliard, Jane and Marshall, Mary

*Time for dementia: a collection of writings on the meanings of time and dementia* edited by Jane Gilliard & Mary Marshall. London : Hawker Publications, 2010.

This collection of writings, from both professional and personal perspectives, offers insight in the context of dementia into the meaning of time, making time, clocks, time to love, being in the moment, night time, past times, pastimes and making good use of time.



### James, Ian Andrew

*Cognitive behavioural therapy with older people: interventions for those with and without dementia.* London; Philadelphia : Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2010.

Cognitive behavioural therapy is recognised as the most effective therapy, yet few clinicians are trained in its use with older people. This book will be essential for anybody using CBT in their work with older people, regardless of their clients' levels of cognitive ability.



### Bartlett, Ruth and O'Connor, Debra

*Broadening the dementia debate: towards social citizenship* Bristol : Policy Press, 2010.

Dementia has been widely explored from the perspectives of biomedicine and social psychology. This book broadens the debate to consider the experiences of people who develop dementia from a socio-political perspective.



### Mulvenna, Maurice and Nugent, Chris

*Supporting people with dementia using pervasive health technologies* edited by Maurice D. Mulvenna, Chris D. Nugent New York : Springer, 2010.

This book reveals how pervasive health technologies have been designed in conjunction with users and carers. It explores the application of novel methods and technologies, encompassing the research, design and evaluation of a new set of pervasive healthcare solutions.

## Recently completed projects

The DSDC works with a range of organisations to provide improved services for people with dementia.

### Dementia information project

This project has been funded by NHS QIS as a baseline assessment of current information provision. The findings will contribute towards the implementation of the standards for integrated care pathways (ICPs) in mental health (2007) and the development of Alzheimer Scotland guidelines.

More information of the project can be found at <http://www.nhshealthquality.org/nhsqis/6208.html>

● [Read the full report >>>](#)

### Fife Dementia Strategy

The Fife Dementia Strategy has been produced in partnership with Fife Council, NHS Fife and the University of Stirling, Dementia Services Development Centre.



Find out more by visiting

<http://socialwork.fife.gov.uk/fds/>

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