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Thinking Matters Symposium

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## **Dementia and Discharge Planning: A thematic analysis on the experiences of care managers with discharge planning for patients with dementia**

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## Background

Dementia is a severe type of cognitive impairment and is characterized as a decline in one's memory, language, problem-solving and other cognitive skills that affects a person's ability to perform everyday activities (Cunningham, McGuinness, Herron & Passmore, 2015). Discharge planning for patients with dementia (PWD) is a crucial component of hospital case management (Deschodt et. al., 2015).

## Questions/Objectives

- This study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of hospital care managers with discharge planning for PWD
- Research question: What are the experiences of care managers with discharge planning for PWD?

## Methods

- Recruitment flyer approved by Maine Medical Center (MMC)
- Interview questions were formulated based on the literature and prior work experience
- Semi-structured interviews with 7 care managers from MMC: 5 social workers, 2 nurse care managers
- Responses were analyzed using thematic analysis

## References

- Cunningham, E. L., McGuinness, B., Herron, B., & Passmore, A. P. (2015). Dementia. *The Ulster medical journal*, 84(2), 79–87.
- Deschodt, M., Devreindt, E., Sabbe, M., Knockaert, D., Deboutte, P., Boonen, S., Milisen, K. (2015). Characteristics of older adults admitted to the emergency room department (ED). *BMC Geriatrics*, 15(1), 1-10. Doi: 10.1186/s12877-015-0055-7



Figure 1. Google Images

“Dementia does not rob a person of their dignity. It’s our reaction to them that does.”

Figure 2. Teepa Snow, Dementia Care Educator and founder of Positive Approach to Care (PAC)

## Findings

- Theme 1: Limited resources available to PWD
  - Mutual acknowledgment that present resources/services are insufficient
- Theme 2: Importance of psychoeducation
  - Agreement that education on dementia consumes the workday
- Theme 3: Focus on individual needs of PWD
  - Care plans designed specially for the patient
- Theme 4: Quality of patient support systems
  - Safe discharges typically rely on strong family support for the patient
- Theme 5: Importance of multidisciplinary collaboration
  - Unanimous agreement on collaboration between hospital staff
- Theme 6: Influence of societal conditions on care
  - Strong discussions on society’s lack of awareness and understanding on the care needs for PWD

## Discussion

The experiences shared by the care managers with regards to discharge planning for patients with dementia were very similar in nature. The participants in this study discussed some of the factors that make discharging PWD difficult. Participants reported on the lack of family support, lack of sufficient funding and no payer source, and lack of long-term care (LTC) and MaineCare facilities as key barriers to discharge. These adverse experiences and conditions were found to lead to longer inpatient hospital stays, putting a strain not only the patient, but the care managers as well. This data could be implemented by hospital care managers in the future to provide adequate discharge plans for PWD, while expanding society’s understanding of the constraints associated with serving this population.