

Caregivers' experiences of medication management advice for people living with dementia at discharge

Mouna Sawan¹, Yun-Hee Jeon¹, Christine Bond², Sarah Hilmer³, Timothy Chen¹, Damian Wennekers⁴, and Danijela Gnjjidic¹

¹The University of Sydney Faculty of Medicine and Health

²University of Aberdeen Institute of Applied Health Sciences

³University of Sydney Sydney Medical School

⁴Utrecht University Faculty of Science

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Abstract

Rationale, aims and objectives: People living with dementia admitted to hospitals are more likely to experience poorer outcomes than people without dementia. Caregivers play an important role in managing medications across transitions of care. This qualitative study explores the experiences and perspectives of caregivers about the medication management guidance provided at hospital discharge. **Methods:** A qualitative approach using semi-structured, telephone interviews was conducted with 31 caregivers of people with dementia across Australia. Purposive sampling was used to ensure maximum variation of diverse experiences and perspectives. **Results:** Caregivers' experiences of medication guidance for people with dementia at discharge were described in three themes including: a) inadequate information about medication management at discharge; b) limited caregiver engagement in medication management decisions; and c) difficulties ensuring medication supply post discharge. Most participants indicated they would like to be included in discussions at discharge. However, participation was influenced by caregivers being overwhelmed by discharge processes; proactively seeking information on medication-related harm; and belief in advocacy as part of their caregiver role. Caregivers reported they would like to receive a tailored medication list for people with dementia which included information on medications that may impact on the patient's cognition, and for hospital staff to communicate with both the community pharmacist and primary care physician, to improve co-ordination post transition. **Discussion:** In our study of caregivers of people with dementia, we identified key recommendations that could be tested to facilitate regular participation of people living with dementia and their caregiver around medication guidance at discharge.

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