

# Patients, carers and staff experiences of a specialist Medical and Mental Health Unit (MMHU) – A Qualitative Study

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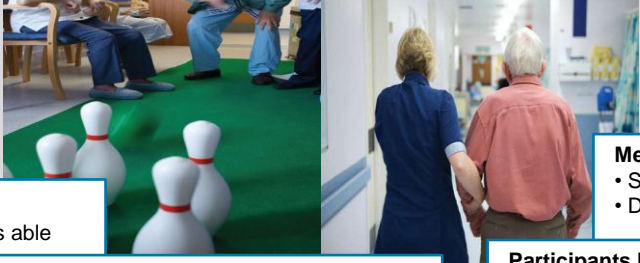
## 1. PATIENT INTERVIEWS

**Background**  
 Dementia and delirium patients and their relatives often report poor experiences of care on acute hospital wards. This resulted in the development of a specialist Medical and Mental Health Unit. The unit is being evaluated through a randomised control trial (RCT) and observational study. This qualitative study adds to the evaluation by exploring patient, carer and staff experiences. Patients with cognitive impairments were interviewed, in hospital, using a tool box of methods; unique to this study. Currently, data collection is almost complete with the iterative process of analysis commenced.

## 2. CARER INTERVIEWS

What are the perceived attitudes and views held by carers about the care given on MMHU?

What views do patients on MMHU hold about the quality of care they receive?



**Method**

- Semi-structured interviews with those patients able
- Activity groups
- Talking Mats
- Data analysed thematically (NVivo)

**Participants N = 18**

- Confused patients >65 years, admitted to acute Health Care of Older People wards and consented to RCT
- 7 Patients interviewed with Talking Mats
- 9 Patients with semi-structured interviews
- 2 Activity groups

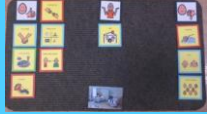
**Method**

- Semi-structured interviews
- Data analysed thematically (NVivo)

**Participants N = 40**

- 40 Carer interviews (20 MMHU, 20 Standard Care)
- Interviews took place in carers homes after the patient had been discharged from hospital

**PATIENT QUOTE & TALKING MAT**  
 P: "They [nurses] are very helpful"  
 INT: "What do they help you with?"  
 P: "Everything"  
 INT: "Can you give me an example?"  
 P: "Talking to you, asking things like, are you alright and checking on you, asking if I feel safe or if I need help with going to the toilet. Being my age and having my disability I really appreciate it."



**CARER QUOTES**  
 "I just noticed that if the patients had any concerns then the nurses took their time to sort of listen. So the nurses had a good rapport going on with patients and didn't brush them off."  
 " I filled some forms out about my Grandma's identity. I put where she lived, where she came from and that she was one of nine and she's the only one left now and just bits of history like that. But no one ever read them, as they were still in the same place I had left them for days."

## 3. STAFF INTERVIEWS

What attitudes and views do staff working on a specialist Medical and Mental Health Unit express?

**Method**

- Semi-structured interviews
- Data analysed thematically (NVivo)

**Participants N = 20**

- 20 MMHU ward staff
- Staff interviewed during working hours in the acute hospital

**STAFF QUOTES**  
 "I think the work seems to be more intense because there's a lot of prompting required, and the nature of the beast with dementia. A lot of people are disorientated, they're confused. So it does tend to be a heavier workload in that respect. Daily tasks, seem to take us considerably longer."  
 "I've noticed on this ward the team work is really good and supportive between the mental health nurses, acute nurses and therapists and has really helped everyone understand the needs of the patients better"



**Standard Care Wards**  
 Evaluation of the MMHU involves comparison with standard care wards (Health Care of Older People). On admission patients over 65 years old with confusion were randomised to either MMHU or standard care. The RCT, observations and interviews were conducted on all wards.

**MOVING FORWARD**

- Complete staff interviews on MMHU
- Interview senior NHS staff to explore the effect of MMHU upon the wider health care system
- Thematic analysis of interviews and Talking Mats
- Thematic analysis of secondary data of staff interviews from Standard Care from NIHR Service Delivery and Organisation project
- Synthesise findings with RCT data and Observation Study (Dementia Care Mapping)
- Results presented in journal papers
- A documentary has been commissioned about MMHU to be released in Autumn 2012

**References.**  
 Harwood, RH., Porock, D., King, N., Hammond, S., (et al) (2010) Development of a specialist medical and mental health unit for older people in an acute general hospital. Medical Crises in Older People. Discussion paper series. www.nottingham.ac.uk/mcop  
 Murphey, J., Gray, C., van Achterberg, T., (et al) (2010) The effectiveness of the Talking Mats framework in helping people with dementia to express their views on well-being. Dementia, 9 (4), 454-472