

Chapter 7 Living with Dementia

Introduction

NICE (2006) describes Dementia as “a disorder that affects how the brain works”. Symptoms vary from person to person, but include a decline in memory, reasoning and communication skills with a gradual loss of the skills needed to carry out daily activities.

There are estimated to be approximately 3099 people in Herefordshire with Dementia, but only 35% of people were diagnosed by 2013.

Issues

Support for dementia has increased within Herefordshire in recent years, with the creation of a Herefordshire Dementia Partnership and the development of Dementia Friendly Communities growing in the county.

There was recognition of the gaps in services by patients and practitioners.

- a) The division of services between working age and older people meant that older people were poorly served for psychological support and patients were increasingly being “fitted” around existing services.
- b) Younger people with dementia have different requirements, and specialist multidisciplinary services should be developed, allied to existing dementia services, to meet their needs for assessment, diagnosis and care. There is no dedicated provision for people with early on-set dementia particularly that addresses employment and other issues.
- c) People with learning disabilities and those supporting them should have access to specialist advice and support regarding dementia. There is an innovative scheme in Herefordshire to develop a care environment dedicated for people with LD. Health and social care staff working in care environments where younger people are at risk of developing dementia, such as those catering for people with learning disabilities, should be trained in dementia awareness.

Stakeholder Views

We need integrated working that addresses housing, money, relationships. This needs to be addressed before the patient can approach recovery.

Mental Health Practitioner

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Mental Health Practitioner

It is galling that certain psychological service only support people up to 65

Patient

Psychology support is poor for older people

Mental Health Practitioner

There are too few elderly mentally ill beds in the county, meaning that patients are placed out of county, which in turn impact on family visits and support. This leads to lengthy stays on the ward as there is nowhere to place them, which is upsetting for patients and families, who would like to be at home.

Mental Health Practitioner

Recommendations

- To support the work of the Dementia Partnership and the development of dementia friendly communities across Herefordshire.
- To continue to raise awareness of dementia including a programme of education for practitioners to improve dementia care. This should result in earlier detection, allowing improved planning with the person and their family.
- To develop liaison psychiatry service that will identify people with dementia and improve clinical care.
- To improve support services for people with early onset dementia
- To improve support services for people with learning disabilities and dementia.
- To review availability of psychology for people with dementia against the level of need.

Facts and Figures

There are estimated to be approximately 3100 people in Herefordshire with Dementia.

As of September 2014, Herefordshire had 1269 people diagnosed with dementia. This is the equivalent of 40.95% of those people estimated to have dementia.

Detection varies between GP practices (between 19% to 62%) and further diagnoses are expected by April 2015.

Early onset Dementia (EOD) affects people under 65 years. 54 people in Herefordshire are estimated to have EOD.

Herefordshire has an older age profile than the average county in the UK; by 2015, the number of people aged over 65 is expected to rise to 46,900.