

PhD Opportunity

Pain management for people living with dementia in Extra Care Housing

Supervisory team:

Director of Studies:

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Supervisors:

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Research Centre: [Association for Dementia Studies](#)

The PhD Opportunity:

Background

There is plenty of research and a large body of evidence that shows that, for older people living with dementia, pain assessment and management is suboptimal as compared to other older people with similar health conditions in hospitals, residential care, nursing care and in their own homes. However, there is no evidence relating to people living with dementia in Extra Care Housing (ECH).

If pain management is addressed in the right way in ECH then these residents are less likely to engage in activities and social interaction. Furthermore, the fact that ECH provides independent living may make pain assessment and management for residents living with dementia who require support with pain management more challenging and complicated.

This PhD project will build on a pilot survey of ECH schemes and care homes, conducted in 2022-2023 by the Housing and Dementia Research Consortium (HDRC)¹, which found that pain support for people living with dementia in both settings is suboptimal, with a significant number of those dependent upon staff for pain management continuing to show or express pain. High numbers of ECH staff lacked in skills and confidence to support people living with dementia experiencing pain and there was little use of guidance or pain assessment tools. Suboptimal pain support for those living with dementia is unacceptable and all staff who are responsible for supporting the needs of a person with dementia need to be skilled within this area.

¹ https://housingdementiaresearch.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/dementia-and-pain-report_v1.1-1.pdf

Aims and objectives

The main aim of this project is to compare pain assessment and management for residents living with dementia, who require support with pain management, with other residents (not living with dementia) in ECH. The objectives are to determine whether residents living with dementia in ECH settings are receiving suboptimal pain management compared to other residents with similar health conditions and compared to those living in care homes, the causes and impacts of this, staff needs and the challenges, successes and good practices.

Indicative research method

The successful PhD candidate will be responsible for formulating the detail of this project. However, it is anticipated that the study will adopt a qualitative approach involving selecting a small sample of extra care housing schemes and care homes as case studies sites, using interviews to understand pain assessment and management for residents living with dementia in more depth than was possible with the survey.

A project in this area will incur some additional costs that will be met by the student, for fieldwork and consultation with experts by experience. The exact costs will depend on the specific project and will be discussed both at interview and kept under review throughout the duration of the project.

Application Process:

To begin the application process please go to:

<https://www.worc.ac.uk/research/research-degrees/applying-for-a-phd/>.

The Interview:

All successful applicants will be offered an interview with the proposed Supervisory Team. You will be contacted by a member of the Doctoral School Team to find a suitable date. Interviews can be conducted in person or over Microsoft Teams.

Funding your PhD:

For information about Doctoral Loans please visit: <https://www.worc.ac.uk/study/fees-and-finance/doctoral-loans.aspx>

During your PhD you can access the Research Conference Support Scheme to support the costs of presenting your research at an external conference.

Research at the University of Worcester

Research is central to the University's mission to make a difference in everything that we do. We are committed to delivering excellent research which extends the boundaries of human knowledge but which also improves people's lives by enabling better health outcomes, improving food security, developing environmentally sustainable solutions for crop production and socially sustainable solutions to our ageing population, enhancing public knowledge and understanding of the past and present.

The University hence focuses its research around five high-level challenges facing society, locally, nationally and globally:

- [Human Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Sustainable Futures](#)
- [Digital Innovation](#)
- [Culture, Identity and Social Exclusion](#)
- [Professional Education](#)

The success of our research is reflected in our continuous improvement in external research assessment processes. In the most recent Research Excellence Framework, REF 2021, the University saw a near 50% increase in the scale of its research and 12% increase in quality, building on its performance in REF 2014 when it was the UK's most improved university in terms of Research Power, a combination of scale and quality.

Research Degrees at Worcester

Our research students are central to our overall mission for research. They are working at the cutting edge of their disciplines and driving forward the quality of our research whilst enriching our research culture. We are looking to increase our research student numbers as a strategic imperative.

Our commitment to our students is reflected in the results of the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2023 in which we ranked 3rd for overall research student satisfaction nationally. Key to our success in this area is the Doctoral School, a focal point for all our research students.

It provides:

- day-to-day support for our students, both administrative and practical, through our dedicated team
- a Research Student Study Space with both PCs and laptop docking station
- a comprehensive Researcher Development Programme for students and their supervisors
- a programme of student-led conferences and seminars

Widening Participation:

As part of its mission statement the University is committed to widening participation for its higher degrees. Although most candidates will have an undergraduate and/or a Masters degree, the University is happy to accept applications from candidates with relevant professional qualifications and work related experience.

For further information or an informal discussion about this project, please contact Dr Julie Barrett: j.barrett@worc.ac.uk