

MEDIA RELEASE

4 August 2015

Brisbane aged care team develops new pain identification tool

A nurse-led aged care team in Brisbane has developed a pain identification tool to improve the comfort and quality of life of older people living in residential care, particularly those with dementia.

The Identify Pain: Ask, Observe, Report project — developed by Wesley Mission Brisbane — includes a practical pain identification tool as well as innovative implementation strategies and extensive staff training, to create a pain-vigilant culture in its aged care facility.

The team is one of five finalists in the Team Innovation category of the 2015 HESTA Aged Care Awards. The Awards recognise those in the aged care sector who make an exceptional contribution to improving the quality of life of older Australians.

Director for Education and Research, Dr Judy Wollin, said pain management was often a neglected area among residents with dementia.

“The Project was the result of an internal audit that showed many care staff were not confident identifying and reporting pain in residents with limited communication abilities,” Ms Wollin said.

A new tool, based on validated instruments, was developed to help staff identify pain in residents using simple words associated with pain, photos of resident pain behaviours and a self-report system to help residents indicate pain where possible.

“We developed a range of implementation strategies, such as a pain education booklet, pocket-sized pain assessment guides, posters and pain-communication checklists as reminders and prompts for staff.

“These tools were placed around the facility to remind staff to ‘Ask, Observe, Report’ any suspected pain.

“Workshops were also conducted over a three-month period to improve knowledge, skills and confidence for pain assessment among all staff.”

Dr Wollin said the pain identification tool has led to a significant improvement in the identification of pain in residents and the use of non-drug interventions. Residents have also reported improved perceived quality of pain management.

Finalists are in the running for a share of the \$30,000 prize pool provided by proud sponsor, industry super funds’ owned bank, **ME**.

The Team Innovation and Outstanding Organisation Award winners each receive a \$10,000 development grant. The Individual Distinction Award winner will receive a \$5,000 **ME EveryDay** transaction account and \$5,000 towards further education.

ME CEO, Jamie McPhee, said, “we’re delighted to give these outstanding individuals, the opportunity to develop and continue to progress their profession, and support innovative health programs that ultimately benefit the entire industry and community.”

The winners will be revealed at the HESTA Aged Care Awards dinner on Thursday 27 August in Canberra.

Learn more about the Awards at hestaawards.com.au

MEDIA CONTACT: Luisa Saccotelli 0400 149 901 or Aileen Muldoon 0419 112 503

*The 2015 HESTA Aged Care Awards is an initiative of HESTA, run in partnership with the National Aged Care Alliance and proudly sponsored by **ME**.*