**All patients with dementia should have pain relief**

*International expert gives comprehensive advice in new one-stop guide to best practice for the condition*

By Sally Gillen

EVERY PATIENT in hospital who has dementia should be given pain relief routinely to prevent those who are unable to communicate that they are in pain being left untreated.

That is the advice of a nurse expert in dementia care, whose book Dementia: The One-Stop Guide, was published last month.

Director of the Dementia Services Development Centre at the University of Stirling June Andrews says patients with dementia will often answer no when asked by nurses if they have pain – even if they do.

If they are unsure of where they are and who they are talking to, patients may feel it is safest to say no when asked any question, writes Professor Andrews.

Therefore nurses should give all patients pain relief to make sure that no one is left untreated. Nurses should be alert to changes in behaviour such as agitation or aggression, which can signal that a patient has unrelieved pain, she adds.

Professor Andrews said it should be best practice to give pain relief, not just to patients post-operatively or those with a condition such as arthritis.

‘What older person does not have some pain? My first question when I am consulted about a patient with dementia in hospital displaying behaviour such as aggression, what we call disturbing behaviours, is whether they have been treated for pain.’

Aimed at patients, carers and professionals, the book gives advice on how to care for people with dementia so they can live well with the long-term condition for as long as possible.

‘Nurses have so many things to think about that I wanted this to be an accessible and fast read for them, many of whom will not have had much training in dementia care,’ said Professor Andrews.

The guide includes chapters on getting a diagnosis, managing care at home and what to expect from the NHS and social care. Insights from dementia nurses, carers and patients, as well as examples of poor dementia care, are included.

Practical tips that community nurses can share with carers include home adaptations and ensuring patients drink enough so they do not develop a urinary tract infection that could lead to a hospital admission.

Hospital nurses are reminded that encouraging family members to feed, clothe and bathe their relative can make the experience of being in an unfamiliar environment less disorientating, while also reducing pressure on staff.

Find out more

Dementia: The One-Stop Guide is published by Profile Books and costs £9.99. It is available from all good bookshops and as an e-book.

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**Code of conduct for professional standards revised**

THE NURSING and Midwifery Council has published a revised code of conduct setting out professional standards for nurses and midwives.

The new code, which replaces the 2008 version, will be sent to its 670,000 registrants. It is shaped around four statements – that good nurses and midwives will prioritise people, practise effectively, preserve safety and promote professionalism and trust. The code includes standards on a professional duty of candour, delivering care based on the best evidence available, fundamentals of care and the use of social media.

Find out more

The code comes into effect on March 31 and can be downloaded at tinyurl.com/nkss3g