Chris O’Connor
Nurse consultant for dementia
at Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

John’s Campaign is starting to gain ground

Open visiting for carers of people with dementia in hospital is proving popular

My trust has joined John’s Campaign, which advocates for the right to stay with people who have dementia in hospital.

The campaign was launched by author Nicci Gerrard. Her father had Alzheimer’s disease and his condition deteriorated after he was admitted to hospital.

The trust has already introduced open visiting and carers’ passports. Even before this, staff on many wards allowed carers to support their loved ones outside visiting times, although many carers conformed to visiting rules.

Equal partners
John’s Campaign gives carers the right to continue to support people with dementia and be seen as equal partners in their care.

When patients are admitted, their carers are asked if they want to continue to be involved in their care. Staff will ensure that advice families and carers provide is written down in patients’ documents, so that the multidisciplinary team understand their needs.

Before open visiting and John’s Campaign were introduced, staff were concerned that the wards would be overrun with visitors and that there would be confidentiality issues.

According to staff feedback, however, carers respect their role and allow them to get on with their job, although occasionally carers may ask doctors or nurses questions that could delay ward rounds.

All trust staff need more information about the effects of dementia and the importance of carers being able to provide continued support.

John’s Campaign is an important initiative to develop a more dementia-friendly hospital.

Further information about John’s Campaign is available at johnscampaign.org.uk

Reviewed by Kathryn Louise Walker, clinical research nurse at Newcastle Biomedical Research Centre and Unit

Non-Alzheimer’s and Atypical Dementia
Michael D Geschwind and Caroline Racine Belkoura (Eds)
Wiley Blackwell
£94.99 | 232pp
ISBN: 9781444336245

This comprehensive overview of atypical dementia, including Lewy body, prion diseases, and leukoencephalopathies, was written specifically for multidisciplinary teams.

Its case studies are helpful for translating information from the page to patient, and the references at the end of each chapter are useful for further reading. Some of the language used is technical and a reader would most likely need at least moderate knowledge of atypical dementia to follow it. Additionally, due to the small font and the style of writing this text can be difficult to follow in parts and it can be heavy going.

Nevertheless, the book offers a good overview of a complex subject area, and I found the multidisciplinary slant refreshing.

It would be an excellent addition to any university/hospital library, and I would recommend it to specialist or research nurses focusing on atypical dementia.

Reviewed by Kathryn Louise Walker, clinical research nurse at Newcastle Biomedical Research Centre and Unit

Whistle Blowing and Ethics in Health and Social Care
Angie Ash
Jessica Kingsley
£79.99 | 184pp
ISBN: 9781849056328

Accessible in terms of language and presentation, this book’s nine chapters cover three themes: organisational culture and leadership, whistle-blowing as a moral activity, and policy and regulatory systems and frameworks.

The author describes whistle-blowing and the media culture in which it takes place, as well as the effects of raising concerns on the individuals and organisations involved.

There is discussion about the culture in which health and social care professionals work, and the moral and ethical challenges they face.

As the book’s postscript states, the desire for whistle-blowing to prompt action or open dialogue is clear.

This book would be an asset to nurses in many areas, including older people’s nursing. I would also recommend it for leadership programmes or modules.

Reviewed by Ailsa McMillan, lecturer in division of nursing, School of Health Sciences at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh