Management of levodopa
A person-centred approach to administering levodopa for nursing home residents with Parkinson’s disease and a detailed exploration of its side effects
rcni.com/levodopa-management

Care crew activities
Improving the experience of dementia patients in an acute hospital through one-to-one care and daily timetabled group activities managed by a care crew
rcni.com/care-crew-activities

Communication to reduce anxiety
How to communicate skilfully and sensitively with older people with dementia to reduce their anxiety and increase their levels of engagement
rcni.com/dementia-communication

In brief

Staff report that a robotic seal called Paro is having a therapeutic effect on residents at Longlands Care Home in Blackbird Leys, an Orders of St John Care Trust nursing home in Oxford. When the furry robot is stroked or held it moves its head and legs, and makes baby seal noises. Use of the robot, which is being assessed as part of a study by the Oxford Institute of Population Ageing, offers the benefits of animal therapy without health and infection risks.

Vulnerable patients are at ‘high risk’ of food poisoning due to meals being prepared in mouldy kitchens or on unclean worktops, food trolleys and sinks, the Press Association has reported. The report is based on information obtained under the Freedom of Information Act and concerns about 400 care homes, hospices, hospitals, children’s nurseries and school clubs. One care home was found to be infested with cockroaches and another had evidence of rats.

Public Health England lead nurse in quality, mental health, learning disability and dementia Pauline Watts has collected an OBE from the Queen at Buckingham Palace. Ms Watts has given the honour in recognition of services to nursing and health visiting.

The number of hospital admissions in England reached a record 16.2 million last year with baby boomers – people aged 65-69 – making up the largest group of people admitted. Ten years ago there were 12.7 million admissions according to the NHS Digital report Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity 2015-16.

Visiting Rights

‘Never be afraid to complain’

A senior nurse has advised families never to be afraid of raising concerns about the standard of care their loved ones receive.

Four Seasons Health Care head of nursing Joanne Strain made her comments after the Care Quality Commission (CQC) announced that care homes must reveal how many patients they have evicted and how many relatives have had visiting rights restricted.

‘Most people know how to complain, but it is understandable some might be afraid to,’ said Ms Strain, who is responsible for nursing at Four Seasons Health Care’s 300 UK care homes.

Relatives concerned about care have ‘a right and a duty to speak out,’ she added.

The CQC’s decision follows a report on BBC Two’s Victoria Derbyshire programme about relatives being prevented from visiting loved ones after they had complained about poor care.

Dementia

TV soap films special dementia episode

Emmerdale, the ITV soap opera, will feature a storyline in which former vicar Ashley Thomas, played by John Middleton, is diagnosed with stroke-related early onset vascular dementia.

In developing the storyline, Emmerdale producers worked closely with the Alzheimer’s Society and Methodist Homes, which runs care homes for people with dementia.

The episode will show Ashley’s confusion as he leaves hospital and goes home alone.

Alzheimer’s Society director of operations Kathryn Smith said: ‘Storylines like this can raise awareness of dementia and break down the stigma still associated with the disease.’

Dementia currently affects 850,000 people in the UK.

Funding

People with dementia and their carers do not receive personal care budgets, claims charity

Fewer than one third of people who receive social care support for problems with memory and cognition are also allocated cash by their local council to pay for care or support, according to the Alzheimer’s Society.

Anyone receiving such support from social services is entitled to a personal care budget.

The charity conducted a ‘mystery-shopper’-style evaluation of 60 councils in England to investigate whether personalised care budgets were available to patients with dementia.

It concluded that many councils fail to make people with dementia aware of their entitlement to personal care budgets.

Nearly two thirds of local authorities failed to provide information that is relevant to people with dementia, the charity said, while 7% deterred callers from pursuing claims for personal care budgets, with some saying the process is ‘complicated’.

The Alzheimer’s Society has issued a guide for councils to improve the personal budgets process for people with dementia and their carers, and has called on authorities to sign up to a dementia-friendly personal budgets charter.

To view the Alzheimer’s Society guide go to www.alzheimers.org.uk/personalbudgetscharter

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