

# Living well in care homes

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New research highlights key components that are important to older people's satisfaction while living in care homes, to enhance their quality of life. Credit: Massey University

Treating elderly people in long-term care facilities with respect and dignity significantly increases their quality of life, according to new research from Massey University, in partnership with Metlifecare.

As the number of people over the age of 80 increases globally, attention needs to be paid to the ethical quality of elder care in long-term institutions. Moving into a care home involves life changes that significantly impact on an individual's quality of life, including alterations in social interactions and adapting to issues involving privacy, dignity and independence. Now, new research from Massey University's College of Health highlights key components that are important to [older people](#)'s satisfaction while living in [care homes](#), to enhance their quality of life.

In 2015, Dr Polly Yeung, Dr Michael Dale and Associate Professor Kieran O'Donoghue from the School of Social Work and Dr Vivien Rodgers from the School of Nursing, partnered with Metlifecare to conduct an independent study to evaluate a pilot scheme on older people living in a care home using the Eden Alternative - a philosophy of person-centred care - and another care home using a standard nursing home model.

Dr Yeung says findings indicated positive results related to satisfaction of care home residents and their family, support the work of the culture change movement underpinned by the Eden Alternative philosophy and the need to focus on psychological, social and emotional wellbeing in addition to physical health to maximise the positive experience of older people within the care homes.

"One significant strength identified as a strong predictor on care home residents' satisfaction is dignity. As demonstrated in this pilot study, issues of dignity are part of daily life, ranging from interpersonal communication to personal care. Supporting dignity should be the basis to build relationships between staff members and care home residents. Dignity towards care home residents, family members and staff can be modelled so it becomes a fundamental characteristic of the care home culture," she says.

Dr Yeung says the philosophy of resident-centred care has proven to be workable, achievable and desirable for Metlifecare. "Results demonstrated that Metlifecare has made significant effort to instil cultural transformations in nursing home settings, in particular to maximise care home residents' dignity, and provide opportunities for psycho-social wellbeing. This will have significant impact on service provision for our ageing community. As a result of the resounding success of the pilot project, Metlifecare will develop a unique model of their own resident-directed care to be rolled out to all 24 of their villages."

Clinical nurse director of Metlifecare Tanya Bish says the study has been a valuable experience, with results confirming the company is on the right track with more to come for the residents.

"Developing a model that works for those in our care homes as well as our care workers has been a priority. Really communicating cultural, social, physical and emotional wellbeing factors is an area we've been strengthening along with the functionality of our facilities. We have two care homes opening this year and an extensive amount of research has gone into both their design and wellbeing to give residents the best services possible," Mrs Bish says.

#### Key findings:

- Older people from the care home with the Eden Alternative Pilot reported 100 percent satisfaction on being treated with respect when compared to 70 percent from the care home using the standard nursing home model.
- Older people from the care home with the Eden Alternative Pilot reported 100 percent satisfaction with the conditions of their current living place when compared to 90 percent from the care home using the standard nursing home model.

- Older people from the care home with the Eden Alternative Pilot reported 93 percent satisfaction on their quality of life when compared to 60 percent from the care home using the standard nursing [home](#) model.

Provided by Massey University

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