

Aged care could be beneficial for people with dementia: Australian report

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Credit: Gerd Altmann, Pixabay

Australians living with dementia who move into residential aged care

after a hospital stay are less likely to be readmitted to hospital within one year than those who return to living in the community, according to a new report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)

[The report](#), "Transitions to residential aged care after hospital for people living with [dementia](#)," explores how people living with dementia move between hospitals and residential aged care and their subsequent use of health services following the hospitalization.

About 4 in 10 (38%) people living with dementia who entered residential aged care after being hospitalized were readmitted to hospital within 12 months, a substantially lower rate than those who continued living in the community (6 in 10 or 62%).

They were also less likely to have an emergency department presentation (50%) compared with 63%.

"Dementia is a significant and growing health and aged care issue in Australia that has a substantial impact on the health and quality of life of people with the condition, as well as their family and friends," said AIHW spokesperson Louise Gates.

"The care needs of people living with dementia increase as their dementia progresses, which often results in people living with dementia moving into residential aged care to receive ongoing care, or changing facilities as care needs change.

"Having a better understanding of how people with dementia access health services and move between hospitals and residential aged care can contribute to improvements in the health and aged care systems and policies to better meet the needs of Australians living with dementia."

In a single year, 79,000 people aged 65 or older living with dementia

were hospitalized for any reason, including their dementia. Of these people, 62% (or 49,000 people) were living in the community prior to their hospitalization while the remainder lived in residential aged care.

"One in 4 (23%) of those people who lived in the community prior to their hospitalization moved to residential aged care within one week of leaving hospital. This increased to 1 in 3 (33%) at 3-months and to 37% at 12-months after leaving [hospital](#)," Gates said.

The 2021 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety recommended better integration between health and aged care systems to improve outcomes for older Australians and structural changes in data capture to allow the interaction between health and aged care systems to be monitored.

This report used data from the National Integrated Health Services Information (NIHSI), a linked data asset which brings together deidentified information on [hospital care](#), deaths, residential aged care services, [prescription medication](#) and services under the Medical Benefits Schedule. Analyzing linked data provides new insights into how people with dementia access health services and move between hospitals and residential aged care.

The study focuses on people's first hospitalization in 2017 and compares transitions to [residential aged care](#) or mortality in the 7-days, 3-months, and 12-months after discharge for people living with dementia and people without dementia.

This represents the most recent linked data available for the analysis that relies on multiple sources to identify people living with dementia and data which allow outcomes over 12-month to be examined.

Due to data availability at the time of study, changes in [health](#) and care

aged care services following recent aged care reforms and the COVID-19 pandemic were not examined.

Provided by Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)

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