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Abstract

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Topic: Support Services for Carers

FLEXIBLE RESPITE FOR CARERS OF PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

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Objectives: The provision of respite is consistently identified by carers of people with dementia as one of their critical unmet care needs, and the overall proportion who use available respite programs tends to be low. In Australia this is likely to be the result of numerous complex and interacting factors including: a complex and fragmented service environment; carers' beliefs and attitudes about services; and their beliefs about their own caring responsibilities.

Carers' use of support services can also be influenced by perceptions of poor service quality, lack of availability, cost, and a lack of flexibility in service arrangements. Whilst the delivery of flexibility is consistently highlighted as critical to carers, there is currently a lack of clarity in regards to what domains are most important when designing and delivering flexible services. To fill this gap, this paper reports on a review of the academic and grey literature. Iterative coding was undertaken and five domains of flexibility were identified (location, timing, providers, activities and funding) providing insights into flexible respite practices for three service types (day care centres, in-home services and residential respite care). Results from the review suggest that aspects of flexibility vary by service type and across settings. The implications for respite policy and practice are discussed.

Disclosure of Interest: None Declared

Keywords: carers, dementia, Respite