

The Older Persons' Transitions in Care (OPTIC) Study

The Seniors' Health Strategic Clinical Network is interested in research that can lead to improving transitions in care experienced by older adults. The Older Persons' Transitions in Care (OPTIC) Study led by Seniors Health SCN Research Community member Dr. Greta Cummings from the Faculty of Nursing at University of Alberta and funded by CIHR, Covenant Health, and Canadian Frailty Network, aims to identify what contributes to successful transitions so that care can be improved for residents of Long Term Care.

Program Description

Common events such as falls and shortness of breath often lead residents of Long Term Care settings to visit the Emergency Department. When seniors transition from one care setting to another they may experience unsafe, delayed, and fragmented care. The Older Person' Transitions in Care (OPTIC) program emerged to address this issue.

Research was conducted in the Central Okanagan district of the Interior Health region in British Columbia and the Edmonton Zone of Alberta Health Services. In Phase 1, face-to-face interviews were conducted with more than 70 people (residents and families, healthcare practitioners, and managers/administrators) to identify key elements of transition success. In Phase 2, the study tracked 637 residents transferred from Long Term Care settings to one of two Emergency Departments in British Columbia and Alberta over a 12-month period.

The study has provided in-depth descriptions of transitions, including the health conditions of residents before, during, and after their transition to the hospital. These descriptions illustrated the conditions that make for successful transitions from long-term care facilities to the emergency department. Successful transitions are, above all, resident-focused and timely. In addition, successful transitions are safe, effectively treat a specific condition, waste no resources and provide an equal level of care to residents regardless of their sex, age, or dementia status. These findings led to the creation of *Quality Indicators for Older Persons' Transitions in Care*.

The OPTIC research team's findings have led to the development and funding of three more OPTIC studies: IMPACT, EXACT, and most recently OPTIC QI.

IMPACT (IMProving communication during Aged Care Transitions) investigates the effectiveness of using a standardized two-page evidence-informed Inter-Facility Patient Transfer Form to improve communication of care information for long term care residents transferred to the ER

OPTIC EXACT (EXamining Aged Care Transitions decision making) explores attributes of avoidable transitions and factors influencing decisions to transfer long term care residents to emergency departments in ambiguous cases. The outcomes of this study will be decision-making guidelines for healthcare leaders and long term care staff.

OPTIC QI is a Systematic Review on **Quality Indicators for Older Persons' Transitions in Care**. The study team is assessing over 10,000 research articles to extract quality indicators for older persons' transitions in care. A panel of experts from diverse care settings and professions will then evaluate and rank the relevance and importance of the extracted quality indicators. The result will be a validated set of multi-setting quality of care measures for older persons' transitions in care.

Learn more about our work at www.clear.ualberta.ca