

12th World Congress on
ADVANCES AND INNOVATIONS IN DEMENTIA
September 17-18, 2018 Singapore

Innovative technologies for dementia care in the home

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In Australia, there are more than 400,000 individuals living with dementia. The number of people with dementia is estimated to increase to more than 500,000 by 2025 and over 1,000,000 by 2050. Dementia is a major cause of disability in older Australians; nearly 95% of individuals living with dementia are aged 65 years or older. The estimated economic burden of dementia in Australia costs around \$14 billion (2016) and is expected to increase more than double by 2050. Currently, around 75% of Australians with dementia live in the community. Projections suggest future demand for care will not be met. Innovative technologies are increasing the possibility for people with dementia to remain living independently at home. Evidence shows that being able to stay at home and performing similar routines prior to diagnosis can slow the progression of dementia. However, as the disorder progresses, it is important that the dementia sufferer has access to in-home services and support from doctors, allied health services, carers and family. Home modifications to improve mobility and accessibility may become necessary. Despite the high costs associated to living at home for people with dementia, the cost is 85% less on average compared to the costs for those living in residential aged care setting. With the growing burden of dementia in Australia, there is a crucial need to develop a comprehensive holistic national approach to improving the quality of care and support for people with dementia living in the community. Health policies are to be implemented to increase accessibility to safe and cost-effective technologies that improves the quality of life of people with dementia to continue living independently in the community.

Biography

Alessandra Doolan is an independent Healthcare Consultant specializing in health economics, advocacy and policy. She has obtained her PhD in Clinical Research and Master of Public Health at the University of Sydney, majoring in Health Economics and Policy Research. She has over 20 years of experience in healthcare in the public and private sectors including the areas of community care, allied health and hospital quality management systems. She has founded the Health and Technology Advisory Group, working with various organizations in improving healthcare access for patients and communities. She holds an honorary title at the Sydney Medical School, The University of Sydney. She is recently appointed to the role of a Specialist Advisor in the areas of medical devices, vaccines and biologicals with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), the regulatory body for therapeutic goods in Australia and a Division of the Australian Government Department of Health.

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