



Newsletter

Flinders Assistant for Memory Enhancement (FAME) Project

FLINDERS DIGITAL HEALTH RESEARCH CENTRE (FDHRC)

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Welcome

We are a group of researchers and developers from Flinders Digital Health Research Centre at Flinders University. We have a shared interest in exploring digital technologies and how they may support and empower people to age in in their own communities.

Backed by a Research and Innovation Grant from Dementia and Aged Care Services Fund, we are developing an app to support people living with mild cognitive impairment and early stage dementia to age in place. The app can be personalised to the unique needs and interests of the person using it.



The Team

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Project Update

Focus Groups

We are excited to report that the first phase focus groups are complete. Four focus groups took place at the venues of Southern Cross Care (Myrtle Bank Cottage) and Dementia Australia (Glenside).

Our partner organisations enrolled six participants across four focus groups. The mean age of the non-professional carers was 75 and between them they had 26 years of experience in a, non-professional, caring role. There was a great depth of experience amongst this group, and we are very grateful that they were able to volunteer their valuable time.

We were able to elicit some very interesting feedback and were privy to some wonderful stories and outcomes informed the development of the app. The discussion gave us plenty to think about regarding the protocol for the pilot study.

The App

Development of the app is on schedule to meet the first testing phase which will happen in July. We have recently taken delivery of 75 brand new Apple iPads which will be distributed to study participants after app testing has been completed.

Conference presentations

October 2017

NNIDR's - Australian Dementia Forum 2017

Assistance through personalised online technology for older people with early stage dementia
Lua Perimal-Lewis, Jennifer Tieman, Sue Gordon, and Anthony Maeder

November 2017

Flinders; and

Western Older Persons Mental Health Characteristics of Physical Exercise and Computer-Based Cognitive Training Interventions for People with Mild Cognitive Impairment
Lua Perimal-Lewis and Anthony Maeder

Next steps

Publications

The first publication arising from the focus groups will report the findings in relation to app development and whether and how the experience described by participants supported the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (W3C, 2008). We have recently completed coding of the discussions, and draft is underway.

Two further publications are planned; details will be provided in the next quarterly report.

Fifth Focus Group

We are currently planning to conduct a fifth (and possibly a sixth) focus group to add breadth and depth to the richness of the data we have collected. If you or someone you know is interested in participating, please contact Tamara at the email address listed on the previous page.

Pilot Study

The pilot study will commence in September for twelve weeks and recruitment is starting soon. We are currently meeting with potential new stakeholders to increase the recruitment potential.

We are looking for people aged 65+ who have received a diagnosis of mild cognitive impairment or early stage dementia, or who are concerned about forgetting appointments, losing train of thought in conversations, not following movie or book plots or feeling overwhelmed when making decisions or planning tasks.

If you or someone you know may be interested, please contact Lua or Tamara at the email addresses listed on the previous page.

What we have learned

One of the strongest themes to emerge from our focus group data concerns the impact of music on the person with dementia. Over the course of our discussions, this single topic was mentioned 28 times. Music was described as a healer, having a calming effect, soothing, and a leveller.

Participants described anecdotes of their loved ones dancing in the aisles at the cinema or a musical event.

Participants also recommended two films, **Finding Your Feet** and **The Mountain** which they thought others may enjoy. The music and cinematography captivated all members of the audience.

Consortium partners



We are delighted to work with the team at **Southern Cross Care** and we are excited about the potential of this project, and building our relationship for the future.

We are extremely grateful to **Dementia Australia** for their commitment to the study, and for their continued support in a busy environment.



Spotlight on...

Dr Tamara Agnew

I am an early career researcher having recently graduated with my PhD from UniSA. My role in this project is to plan and run the focus groups, and to support Lua and the CIs to develop and implement the pilot study.

This research is so unique; it is very exciting to start my career as part of this passionate research team who are setting a standard for research in this field. I have previously worked with adolescent populations and non-professional carers of dementia patients. Both studies have explored well-being and quality of life as an outcome.

In my spare time, I am the Chair of the Governing Council at my children's school, and I am on the research advisory board for a private CAM education Institute. I love spending time outside, sleeping in on Sunday (though that does not happen often!), cooking and spending quality time with my family and friends. I also love food and trying new restaurants!

RAPID RESPONSE

What are you currently reading?

For the Term of His Natural Life, Marcus Clarke

One destination on your bucket list?

Japan, specifically Tokyo. But really, all of it.

If you could only eat one thing for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Eggs... boiled, scrambled, fried, or poached. Yum!