



Innovation,  
Applicability and  
Transferability

## Research Update/Outcome

### Enhancing Quality of Life for Residents with Parkinson's Disease

#### Background

Parkinson's disease is a progressive, degenerative neurological condition that affects a person's control of their body movements. In Australia, it affects more than 80,000 people (2018). Every day, there are 37 people diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

The proportion of people living in a Resthaven residential aged care home with a diagnosis of Parkinson's has increased from approximately 4% of residents in 2006, to approximately 8% in 2019.

#### Literature Review

A recent internal research project literature review ascertained four key factors relating to good management of Parkinson's disease:

- Care management should be holistic, interdisciplinary and individualised.
- The timing and regular review of medication administered to reduce the symptoms of the disease is crucial.
- Exercise to assist in maintaining balance, coordination and strength is essential to assist with motor symptoms.
- Social interaction and relationships are fundamental to maintaining quality of life.

#### The Research Project

To inform Resthaven's service planning and delivery, 23 residents who are living with Parkinson's disease were identified and provided consent to be interviewed, from across eight of Resthaven's residential aged care homes.

All those interviewed indicated that they were satisfied with the support they received from Resthaven.

However, each person described the impact on their life that Parkinson's disease caused. Some of the effects outlined were loss of self-esteem, confidence, constant fatigue, inability to do many tasks, loss of control and changes in family relationships.

Exercise participation was mixed; some of the residents interviewed exercise regularly and note benefits. Others, often with poor mobility, were not exercising, but believed that it would be of benefit.





Participation in social activities was high. The residents interviewed stated that staff education and knowledge about the impact of Parkinson's disease was an important factor in supporting them to live as good a life as possible. This included understanding the symptoms and symptom management, the need for timeliness of medications, and the opportunities to participate in appropriate exercise and social activities.



Participants also wanted access to information about Parkinson's disease and the opportunity to discuss their experience of the condition with other people who also had Parkinson's disease.

### Outcomes

As a result of the consultation and research findings, Resthaven is working with residents and staff to learn more about Parkinson's. This includes plans to display information at all Resthaven residential sites and to ensure that fact sheets are available to residents and their families.

In addition, further and ongoing education will be included in the education programs for direct care staff, nurses and lifestyle staff.

More information about Parkinson's disease can be found at [www.parkinsonssa.org.au](http://www.parkinsonssa.org.au)