

Staff experiences of volunteers supporting older adults in hospital: A mixed-methods study

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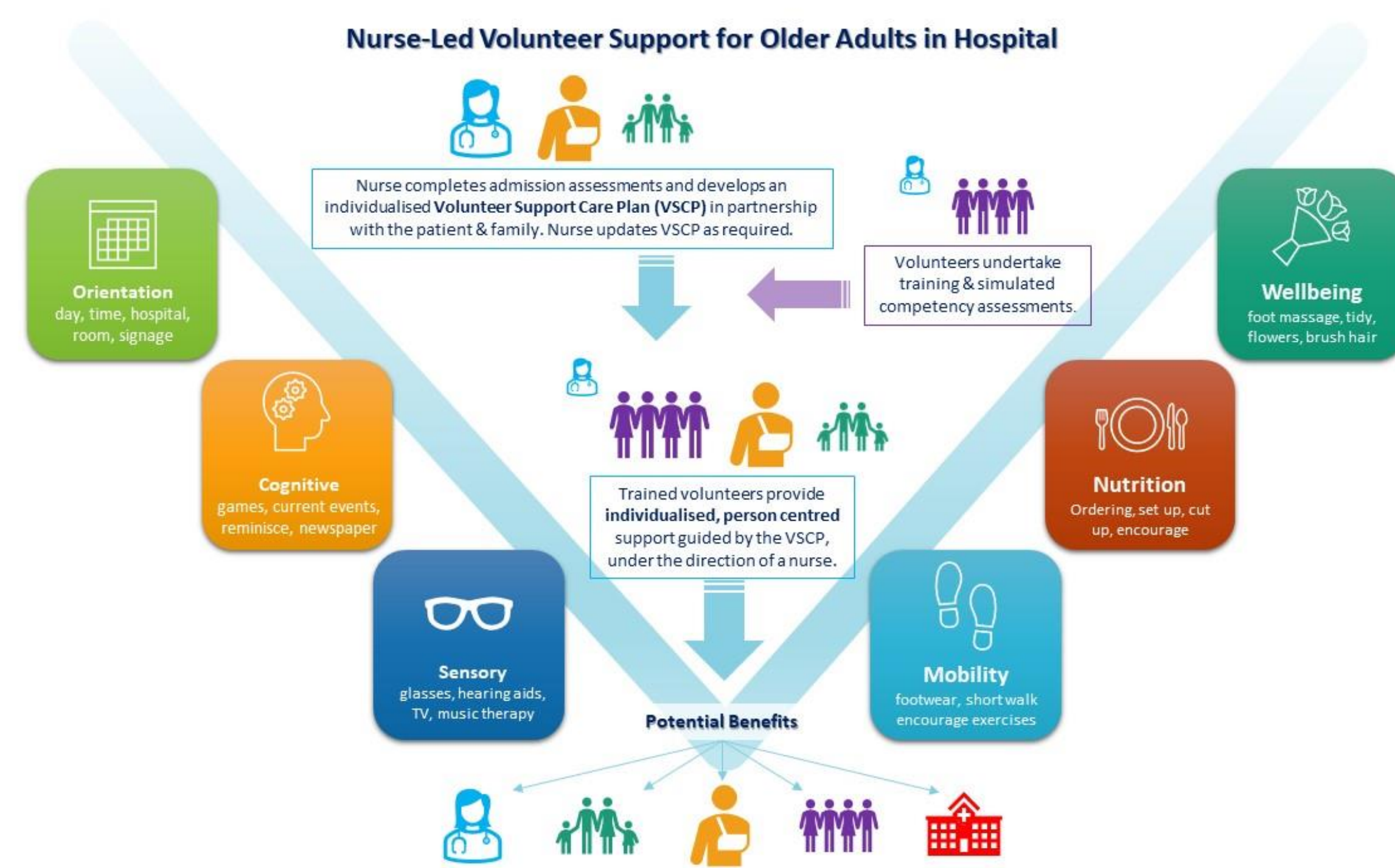
Ramsay Hospital
Research Foundation
This research is supported by the Ramsay Hospital
Research Foundation [2019/PRE/0002 & 2021/PRE/0001]

Hollywood
Private Hospital
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Introduction

- Trained volunteer support with eating & drinking, mobilising and therapeutic activities can impact positively upon older adult patients’ health outcomes related to nutrition, falls & delirium.¹
- Innovative nurse led models of volunteer support capitalise on nurses’ expertise and leadership to guide volunteer activities, potentially increasing the benefits to patients.²
- For staff & volunteers to work closely together and to minimise risk. It is important to understand staff perspectives.
- A cluster randomised control trial investigating effectiveness of a novel nurse led volunteer support intervention in improving outcomes for hospitalised older adults including a stakeholder evaluation was conducted.³

Nurse led volunteer support model²



Stakeholder evaluation: Staff perspective

Objective
To evaluate clinical staff experiences of a nurse led volunteer support program for older adults in hospital and identify challenges.

Design
• Pre- & post-implementation survey
• Quantitative and qualitative

Setting
• Hollywood Private Hospital
• Acute private tertiary metropolitan hospital
• 900+ licensed beds
• Largest hospital in Western Australia & largest private hospital in Australia

Trial registration: ACTRN 12620001173987

Methodology

- Potential Participants**
All clinical ward staff (85 nurses, 11 allied health) working on the two intervention wards invited to participate in the evaluation.
- Survey**
- Rated agreement with 15 statements pre- & post-intervention
 - 1 additional statement post-intervention
 - Scale: 1= Strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree
 - Open ended question: “Do you anticipate/Did you have any challenges with the nurse led volunteer support? If yes please describe.”
- Analysis**
- Independent samples, non-parametric test comparing pre- & post-implementation ratings.
 - Qualitative content analysis of open-ended questions

Recruitment

- Pre-implementation n = 21
• 19 female, 2 male
• 15 nurse, 5 allied health, 1 other
- Post-implementation n = 19
• 17 female, 2 male
• 17 nurses, 2 other

Pre- & Post-implementation ratings

	PRE	POST
Volunteers can provide additional support for patients.	5	5
Volunteers can provide support for nursing staff.	4	4
Volunteers can provide support for allied health staff.	4	4
Volunteer support can improve patient clinical outcomes – reduction in falls.	4	4
Volunteer support can improve patient clinical outcomes – improved mobility.	4	4
Volunteer support can improve patient clinical outcomes – improved dietary intake.	4	4
Volunteer support can improve patient clinical outcomes – improved recognition of delirium.	4	4
Volunteer support can improve patient clinical outcomes – reduced length of stay.	4	4
Volunteers can make a positive contribution to the quality of the patient experience.	4	5
Individualised volunteer support can make my job more satisfying	4	4
Volunteer support can create more time for staff for other care activities.	4	4
The “Older Adult Clinical Nurse” role is valuable in coordinating the volunteer program.	4	4
The “Older Adult Clinical Nurse” role is valuable in developing an individualised ‘volunteer care plan’ for patients.	4	4
Volunteers can help reduce workload.	4	4
The volunteer support role can require too much supervision by nursing staff.	3	2
The nurse led volunteer support program should continue.		5

- No significant differences between pre- & post-intervention ratings.
- **Post-intervention 88% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the program should continue.**

Open-ended responses

- Anticipated challenges (pre):**
- Benefits: no challenges (n=9), improved care (n=2)
 - Challenges: increased workload (n=5)
 - Uncertainties (n=5): implementing program, coordinating different players, scope of practice, managing nurses’ stress.
- Challenges experienced (post):**
- Benefits: no challenges (n=9)
 - Challenges (n=3): increased workload, no communication, rapid patient turnover
 - Uncertainty (n=1): no idea what volunteers were doing

Conclusions

- Pre-intervention: Staff were positive about and open to volunteers with some reservations.
- Post-intervention: Staff had positive experiences of the volunteer program. Communication about the volunteer support could be improved.
- Staff perspective to be further explored in focus group interviews.
- **Staff were supportive of the nurse led volunteer support program for hospitalised older adults.**

Acknowledgements

We thank consumer representative Sue Haydon and the staff of Hollywood Private Hospital for their contributions to this research

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