

Study will look at impact of socialisation robots on wellbeing

Brightwater has been awarded funding from the National Health & Medical Research Council's Cognitive Decline Partnership Centre to determine if the use of a socialisation robot can enhance the wellbeing of people living with dementia.

Affectionately called Alice, the Zorobot robot has been a member of the community at Brightwater for 12 months thanks to a donation from the organisation's RM Harken Fund.

CEO Jennifer Lawrence said that from the time Alice first came to life at Brightwater Madeley residents across all sites have been captivated by her engaging and charismatic personality and the range of interactive activities Alice supports.

"From day one residents have loved engaging with Alice so this research is an important next step in understanding what impact she is having on older adults with cognitive and/or functional decline and how we can make the most of the opportunities she presents," said Ms Lawrence.

The research will specifically investigate the impact of incorporating Alice into activities has on the target group and will explore staff attitudes to the use of Alice within a residential aged care setting.

"Alice presents some fantastic opportunities to try new activities with residents but is only as good as the therapy team trained to use her, so it is important that we understand how staff feel about adding Alice to their therapy toolkit," said Ms Lawrence.

The research project is underway at four Brightwater sites and is supported by the University of Western Australia.

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