Cross-Cultural Communication in an Aged Care Setting

Tuesday 28 November 2023

Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing

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OUR VISION

All aged care consumers in Australia experience inclusive and accessible care

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OUR PURPOSE

To build the capacity and capabilities of Australian aged care providers to deliver services that are welcoming, inclusive and accessible

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OUR SERVICE AREAS

Inclusive practice training and workshops

Capacity building to promote cultural inclusion and equity

Diversity advice and consulting

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Answer in the Chat

Can you describe the cultural and linguistic diversity in staff and clients in your organisation?

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Lily Xiao

Professor Lily Xiao is an internationally recognised dementia caregiving researcher. Professor Xiao's research field includes dementia care, cross-cultural care, workforce development in aged care and chronic disease management for older people.

She holds a Matthew Flinders Professor Award at Flinders University.

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I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

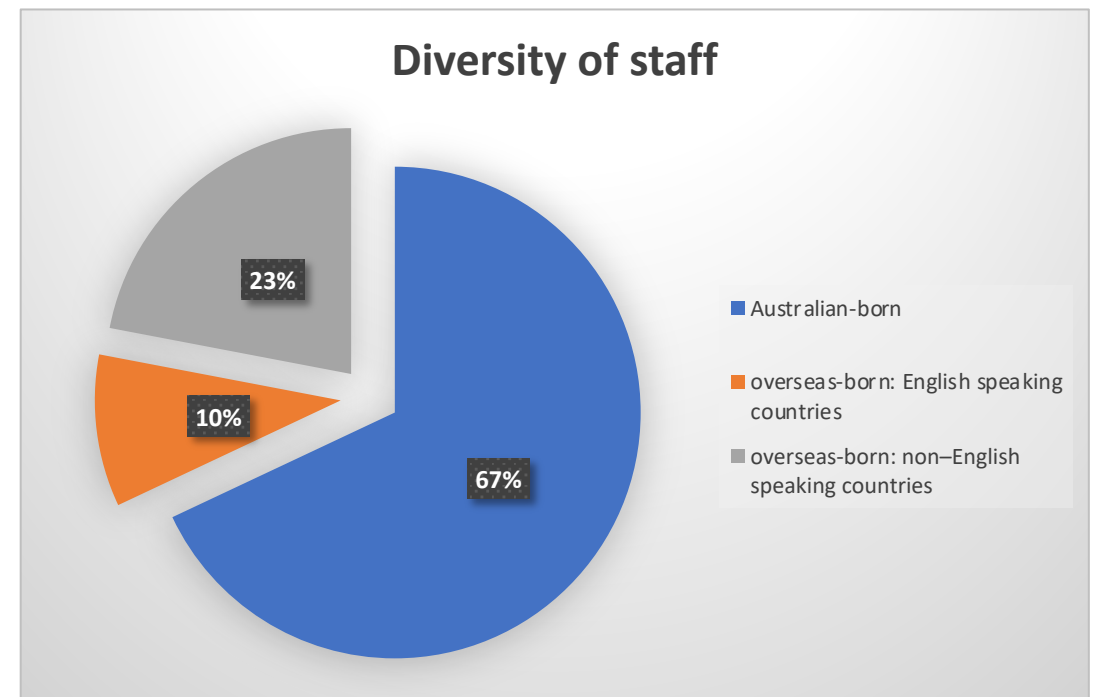Flinders University

Caring Futures Institute
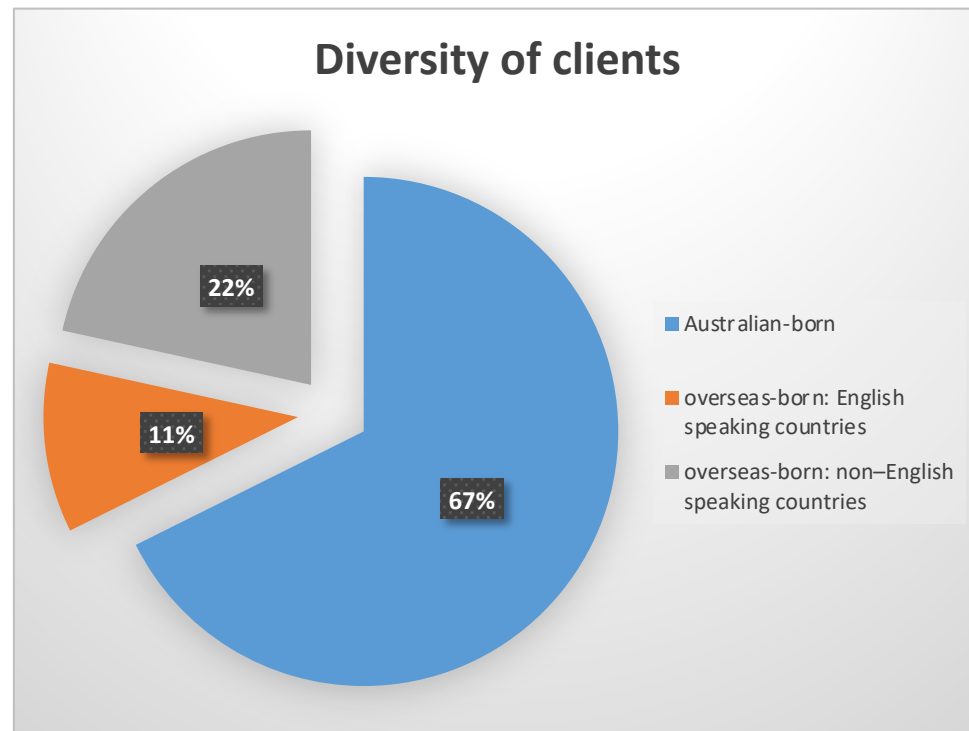
Objectives

- Introduction to the research evidence on challenges in cross-cultural communication in aged care settings.
- Introduction to the research evidence on best practice in cross-cultural communication in aged care settings.
- Introduction to resources to support cross-cultural communication for aged care staff
- Discussion questions

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Part one:

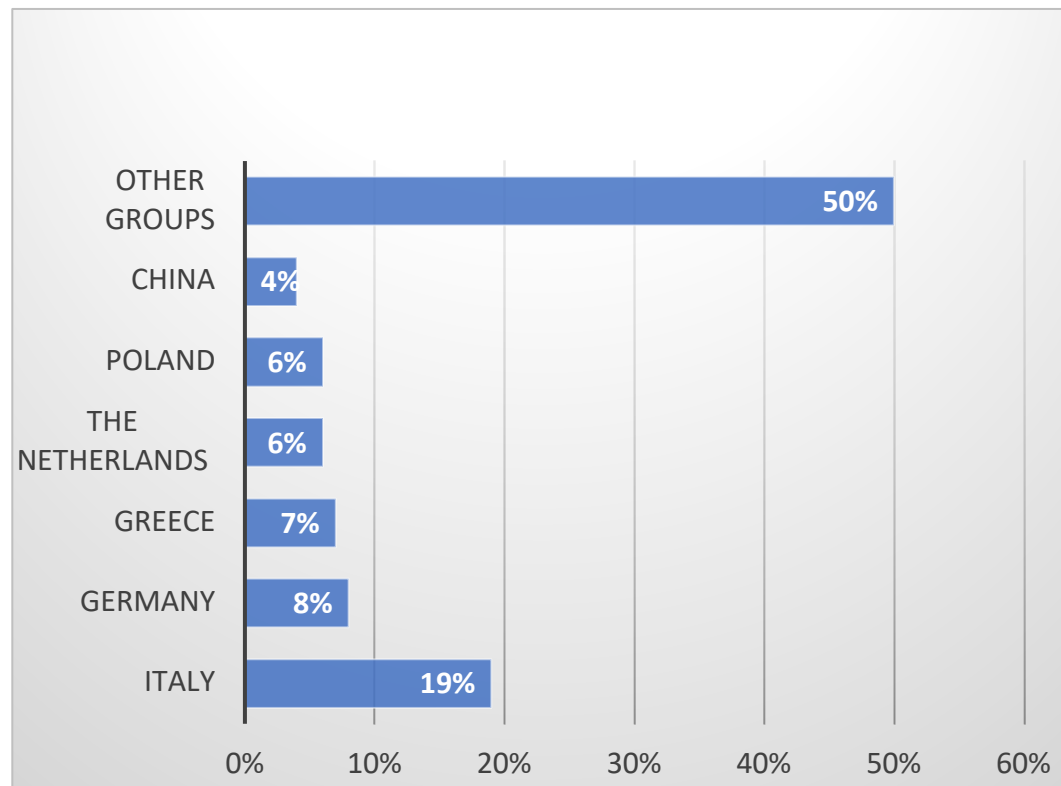## Introduction to the research evidence on challenges in cross-cultural communication in aged care settings.

Cultural and linguistic diversity in aged care

Around one-third of aged care clients and one-third of direct care staff were born overseas and most of them were from non-English-speaking countries.

Diversity of clients
- Australian-born — 67%
- overseas-born: English speaking countries — 11%
- overseas-born: non–English speaking countries — 22%

Diversity of staff
- Australian-born — 67%
- overseas-born: English speaking countries — 10%
- overseas-born: non–English speaking countries — 23%

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The most common non-English speaking countries of birth

Residents

Personal care attendants

Source: The Aged Care Workforce, 2016; AIHW, 2016

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Communication challenges in identifying clients' care needs and preferences

'I have to ask them to repeat sometimes because of their accent' (an Aus.-born resident; Xiao et al., 2017).

'The greatest challenge when I came here was the language, not to be understood
and not understanding others' (Sellevold Gerd et al., 2019, p. 509).

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Communication challenges in identifying clients' needs and preferences

'We have a Vietnamese lady, and we don't even have Vietnamese carer.' (Staff_Ethno; Xiao et al., 2023).

'When there is no one to translate, the misunderstanding is huge! It's like chickens talking to ducks' (Koehn et al.,2018, p. 169).

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Challenges in maintaining meaningful interactions with residents.

In a study in Sweden, researchers observed that residents 'who did not speak Swedish tended to be more alone than those who did' (Strandroos & Antelius, 2017).

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Challenges in maintaining meaningful interactions with residents

Residents viewed staff as uncaring when staff made minimal conversation with them in cross-cultural encounters (Söderman & Rosendahl, 2016).

One Chinese caregiver was concerned about the loneliness her mother experienced in respite care in a nursing home: 'She felt very isolated and had no one to talk to. It is better to keep her at home if there is no suitable place for her' [Chinese 8; Zhang et al., 2023].

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Challenges in communicating clients' care needs and preference in the multicultural team

Personal care staff described: 'We chat to them [residents] and they say to us I would like to do this and this and that. Once you know it just passes on to others' (FG4_Ethno; Xiao et al., 2023).

Challenges in communicating clients' care needs and preference in the multicultural team

'I leave little notes in her room on the little sink area for the next shift. That's what I do, so that they know for the next shift what's happening, yeah' (FG1_non-Ethno; Xiao et al., 2023).

Part two:

Introduction to best practice in cross-cultural communication in aged care settings.

Leading by example in the leadership/management group

They also appreciated the support from management: 'They described their supervisors as "good," "supportive," and "helpful". Monique said "(t)hey [the supervisors] are good. They take care of the situation on time. They try to help' (Ryosho, 2011, p. 66).

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Getting to know others in the multicultural team

'I find that foreign ones are very good. Once they know the job well, they're very quick but they're very efficient…I actually prefer it [to work with overseas born workers]. Because I do think they've got a high standard work ethic' (Gao et al., 2015, p. 116).

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Recognising and employing cultural and language skills in the multicultural team

The way to communicate residents' care needs and preferences in cross-cultural encounters was to have designated bilingual and bicultural staff in each shift: 'I have helped a lot of people learn the most important words and things' (FG3_Ethno; Xiao et al., 2023).

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Recognising and employing cultural and language skills in the multicultural team

Staff encountered difficulties in identify unmet care needs for residents living with dementia: 'Residents who have dementia refer back to their primary language, which is Greek, so even though they might have had very good English…They're agitated, we do have Greek speaking staff on the floor to help' (FG3_Ethno; Xiao et al., 2023).

Peer mentoring and peer coaching in the multicultural team

Migrant staff who were culturally aware of challenges faced by new migrant staff provided peer support for them. They described the support as 'immigrants help immigrants' in adapting to the multicultural team (Goel & Penman, 2015. p. 6).

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Connecting with CALD communities

The onsite church and religious activities also created opportunities for staff to interact with residents: 'In Christian culture there's also saints… So, you have to say something. Wish them happy name day' (FG3_Ethno).

Partnership with clients' families

Three types of staff–family relationships: informing care, consulting each other and co-deciding care (Haunch et al., 2021).

Consulting families is particularly important in cross-cultural care considering the widely reported misunderstanding of and missed opportunities to meet residents' care needs and preferences (Martin et al., 2018).

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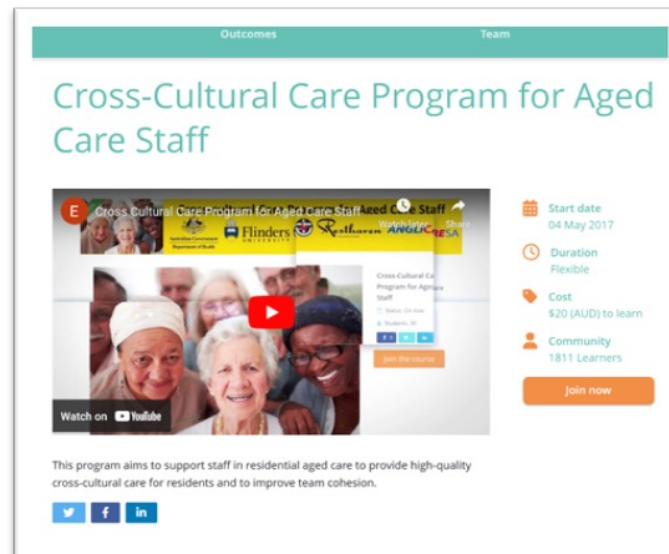University

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Implementing evidence-based multicultural workforce development

- Work with stakeholders to identify priorities in the multicultural workforce development
- Work with research partners to identify evidence-based practice in multicultural workforce development
- Lead the implementation of evidence-based multicultural workforce development

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Part three:

Introduction to resources to support cross-cultural communication for aged care staff.

Resources to support the implementation of the MCWD model

- Multicultural workforce development model and resources in aged care
- A web-based 'Cross-cultural care program for aged care staff'.
- E-Books in PDF:
  - Cross-cultural care program for aged care staff: Facilitator Manual
  - Cross-cultural care program for aged care staff: Staff workbook

Cross-cultural care program for aged care staff

- Module 1: An Introduction to Cross-cultural Care for new staff including work-related English language resources
- Module 2: Cross-cultural Communication
- Module 3: Cross-cultural Leadership
- Module 4: Cross-cultural Dementia Care
- Module 5: Cross-cultural End of Life Care

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Cross-cultural care program for aged care staff

- The program can be accessed via: 'The centre for cultural diversity in ageing' website (https://www.culturaldiversity.com.au/) under the category: Training programs from across the sector.

Conclusions

- A multicultural aged care workforce that reflects the clients' cultural and linguistic diversity is a strength.
- Aged care organisations need to actively recruit direct care staff to match clients' cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Managers in aged care are in an ideal position to build an inclusive environment to facilitate cross-cultural communication.
- Aged care organisations need to create learning environment for staff to engage peer mentoring and peer coaching in cross-cultural communication.

Discussion questions

- Can you please describe the cultural and linguistic diversity in staff and clients in your organisation?
- Can you please describe the top three challenges faced by staff in cross-cultural communication with team members and clients/families?
- Can you please share the strategies you have applied to cope with cross-cultural communication challenges and the outcomes you observed?

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Thank you!

Word Cloud

Describe the top 3 challenges faced by staff in cross-cultural communication with team members & clients/families

Go to **menti.com**
use code **44 71 38**

Or scan the QR code

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Q & A Session

Answer in the Chat

Can you share the strategies you've applied to cope with cross-cultural communication challenges and the outcomes you observed?

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Answer in the Chat

Can you identify one thing you've learned from the session today?

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Thank you!

Thank you for participating today.

For more information, good practice stories and resources visit

🌐 culturaldiversity.com.au

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Feel free to contact us at info@culturaldiversity.com.au

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