



## Aged care researcher says nothing will change until aged care data vaults are unlocked

Unlocking the vast amount of virtually inaccessible data currently held by aged care providers, holds the key to immediately improving care.

While the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety drew on Professor Johanna Westbrook's research in aged care, **Professor Westbrook states that on its own, the report will do little to change the lives of vulnerable people in the short term.**

"While the sector remains data rich but information poor, people will continue to suffer pressure ulcers, mistakes in their medication administration and poor dementia care."

"The almost 3,000 aged care facilities across Australia are required to collect vast amounts of routine data, but often do not have the skills to utilize this data to improve their service. It is also not available to consumers to inform their decisions about where to seek high quality, safe care."

Professor Westbrook is calling for immediate action to improve care in the sector with funding required to enable the analysis of routinely collected data from aged care facilities.

While already working with a number of aged care providers, Professor Westbrook sees this as a nation-wide opportunity. Experienced data analyst researchers and aged care providers would be brought together to unlock the rich sources of information sitting untapped.

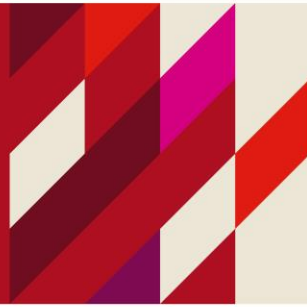
The data – in electronic or handwritten form – would be analysed and fed back in a way that is understandable, practical and actionable.

**For instance, showing the residential aged care provider how many residents have been prescribed antipsychotic medications for periods longer than recommended by guidelines, instantly alerting managers of that facility to organise a review of care. This information should equally be shared with residents' families.**

Problems with the administering and management of a resident's medication is another area of concern, representing the greatest source of complaint to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission and over a third of issues reported to the Royal Commission. Analysis of data from providers would provide information to improve processes, accountability and transparency.

# AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF HEALTH INNOVATION

3 MARCH 2021



**MACQUARIE**  
University

Participating organisations could also share their data with others for benchmarking purposes, leading to sector wide improvements. Eventually this data could be used as a trusted way for consumers to make choices about where they seek care for themselves or their loved ones.

Professor Westbrook emphasises the need for researchers and aged care providers to work together as recommended by the Royal Commission report.

Professor Westbrook is available for comments, please contact [Chrissy.clay@mq.edu.au](mailto:Chrissy.clay@mq.edu.au)

**Media enquiries:**

**Chrissy Clay** M: +61 (0) 415 292 841 E: [chrissy.clay@mq.edu.au](mailto:chrissy.clay@mq.edu.au)