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HOME ALONE? A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION BETWEEN CARE MANAGERS AND OLDER HOUSEBOUND ADULTS

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Social isolation is perceived to be a growing issue for older housebound adults and has a significant impact upon both the individuals physical and mental well-being. This presentation aims to discuss whether the level of social isolation and loneliness as assessed by care managers corresponds to the level of social isolation and loneliness as perceived by the older persons whose care needs are being assessed. This mixed methods study followed up the assessment of 40 older people by 20 care managers with a focus on the accuracy of the care manager's assessment on the level of social isolation experienced by the service user. In order for this to be achieved, structured interviews were conducted with both the older person and the care manager assessing their needs, with a specific focus on the assessment of loneliness and social isolation. Following these initial interviews two focus groups were then undertaken by the care manager to discuss the findings and unpack the assessment pros. The key issues were that the true level of social isolation and loneliness was under assessed by the care manager completing the assessment. The care manager's assessment was predominantly focused on the physical well-being of the older person and heavily influenced by the assessment paperwork. This provides lessons for professionals about the lack of effectiveness of their assessment of social isolation and loneliness in older people, and the potential impact this has on the older person's quality of life.

Biography

Stephen Gethin-Jones has completed his Doctorate at the University of Cardiff in 2012 with a focus on Homecare delivery to older housebound adults, and he continued to develop a specialist interest in home care and support services for older adults, with a particular focus on outcome focused care. He has been involved in the development of services for community care in both the statutory and private sectors. He currently works as a Teacher, teaching a variety of health and social care degrees at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

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