

## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION AIC 2016: #42

### Abstract

1. **Title:**

Changing Dementia Care Practice via Appreciative Inquiry: What's The Evidence?

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3. **Key words:**

Knowledge Translation, Organisational Change, Appreciative Inquiry, Dementia

4. **Abstract Text:**

**a) Background and aims:**

Timely, effective knowledge translation in dementia care is challenging when policy reforms demand rapid change and commercial stakes are high, e.g. consumer directed care. One approach gaining popularity is Appreciative Inquiry – a strengths-based technique rooted in positive psychology and business management. Some Australian service providers engage change consultants to facilitate this process. Our question: How has Appreciative Inquiry been used in dementia care settings, and with what types of outcomes?

**b) Methods:**

A scoping conceptual review was conducted of the dementia care literature (2010+) to identify how Appreciative Inquiry had been used and evaluated.

**c) Results:**

Fewer than 20 articles were found. Beyond qualitative process reports on co-creating 'team vision', no compelling evaluations of knowledge translation or sustainable change outcomes in dementia care were identified. One study reported dementia care staff enjoyed the imaginative narrative approach of Appreciative Inquiry, despite it being initially deemed "woolly thinking" by skeptical clinicians. The method was also used with consumers in participatory action research, e.g. to learn what older people want from care.

**d) Conclusion:**

In dementia care, Appreciative Inquiry has been used to broker vision-setting conversations with staff or consumers. There is a dearth of outcomes evidence. While awaiting quality research showing measureable care-related, staff-based, or organisation-derived change outcomes, we suggest practical considerations for dementia care providers interested in Appreciative Inquiry. In particular that positive 'thinking outside the square' may be a useful circuit breaker to re-engage staff in settings already negative for change efforts.