

Congratulations on your PhD



The ANZJDOHT congratulates

Dr Janet Patricia Wallace on the completion of her PhD
Dip DT, Dip BM, BOH, Grad Cert PTeach, PhD. December 2013

Currently: Program Convenor Graduate Diploma in Dental Therapy
the University of Newcastle

Thesis Title: **The development of a service-learning model of health promotion in the residential aged care environment for dental hygiene students**

The University of Newcastle.

Abstract

Dental hygienists are preventive focused oral health professionals with the skills, knowledge and expertise to provide preventive oral health care. To contribute to the development of these attributes in their students the Faculty of Health and Medicine at the University of Newcastle implemented a novel student placement program in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACF) on the NSW Central Coast, Australia. As with any educational innovation it was imperative to monitor whether the intervention had been positive and if improvements were required.

The program was assessed using both qualitative and quantitative methodology to explore issues that students documented and reported with reference to their placement experiences. After analysing the students' feedback from questionnaires, reflective folios and focus groups the placement proved to provide considerable benefits. Students reported an improvement in their knowledge of the oral health needs of residents; an improvement in their knowledge and ability to assess the oral health needs of residents with Dementia and Alzheimer's disease, improved knowledge relating to medical and dental conditions of older people; increased confidence working with other health professionals and an increased knowledge of the RACF environment.

Early results and feedback showed that there was a need for the development of a more comprehensive 'real life' orientation that depicted the student journey and experience during the RACF placement. Students reported feeling anxious and nervous in the early stages of the placement, and felt the pre-placement orientation did not prepare them for the challenges of dealing with cognitively impaired residents nor did it prepare them for interacting with staff in the RACFs. As a result student learning in the initial stages of the placement was hindered until they became acclimatised to the RACF environment and its challenges.

The results from phases one to five of this research enabled a DVD to be produced depicting the RACF placement program using recent graduates who had previously completed a RACF placement during their own undergraduate degree. The DVD provides a comprehensive representation of the

RACF environment and its daily routines and includes a series of scenarios that show students dealing with the challenges of providing oral hygiene care to residents with Dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The DVD has been used to provide undergraduate dental hygiene students with a more realistic orientation to the aged care placement enabling them to transition from the classroom to the 'real life' experience that is residential aged care in a more positive and timely manner. The impact of the DVD on the student experience was measured by a two-group qualitative study. The findings and tools developed from this research have been implemented in the Bachelor of Oral Health degree program at the University of Newcastle, Australia.

There has also been international, national and local interest in the research and its findings with funded research development utilising dental hygienists in residential aged care facilities on a permanent basis currently underway.

This thesis is available to read or download at <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/1045491>

The DVD is available by emailing:
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Thesis Publications

Wallace, J.P; Taylor JA, Wallace LG, Cockrell DJ. Student focused oral health promotion in residential aged care facilities. *International Journal of Health Promotion and Education* 2010; 48(4):111-30

Wallace, J.P; Taylor JA, Blinkhorn FA. An assessment of a Service-Learning placement programme in residential aged care facilities for final year dental hygiene students. *Journal of Disability and Oral health* 2012; 13(14) 163-167

Wallace, J.P; Blinkhorn, A.S, Blinkhorn FA. Reflective folios for dental hygiene students: what do they tell us about a residential aged care student placement program? *European Journal of Dental Education* 2013 DOI: 10.1111/eje.12044

Wallace, J.P; Blinkhorn, A.S, Blinkhorn FA. An assessment of the educational value of service-learning community placements in residential aged care facilities. *International Journal of Dental Hygiene* 2014 DOI: 10.1111/idx.12080

Wallace, J.P; Blinkhorn, A.S, Blinkhorn FA. Dental hygiene students' views on a Service-learning residential aged care placement program. *American Journal of Dental Hygiene* 2014; 88 (5) 309 - 315