

Healthy Ageing Current Awareness update

January 2021

Welcome to the monthly **Healthy Ageing Current Awareness Update** (HACAU), produced by [PHE Knowledge and Library Services](#) and the Life Course Team. The purpose of this update is to provide you with the latest, best evidence about healthy ageing and dementia risk reduction, to help you make informed decisions.

To receive these Current Awareness Updates regularly, sign-up [here](#).

Please note that not all the articles and resources referred to in this alert are freely available. Some articles may require an Athens username and password, and for PHE and the NHS staff, these can be obtained from <https://openathens.nice.org.uk/>. If you do not work for Public Health England, please contact your local library service who will be able to help you obtain articles.

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- [Health Risk Factors, Healthy Ageing, and Dementia](#)
- [Living Well with Dementia](#)
- [Physical Activity and Ageing](#)
- [Mental Health and Ageing](#)
- [Multiple Long Term Conditions and Frailty](#)
- [Ageism and Discrimination](#)

Health Risk Factors, Healthy Ageing, and Dementia

[Distance Assessment for Detecting Cognitive Impairment in Older Adults: A Systematic Review of Psychometric Evidence.](#)

Distance or remote cognitive assessments, administered via phone or computer platforms, have emerged as possible alternatives to traditional assessments performed during office visits. Distance refers to any nontraditional assessment feature, not only or necessarily location. We conducted a systematic review to examine the psychometric soundness of these approaches. The validity of cognitive assessments with older adults appears supported at lower but not higher distance. Less is known about the reliability of such assessments. Future research should delineate the person and procedure boundaries for valid and reliable test results.

[Mapping and understanding the decision-making process for providing nutrition and hydration to people living with dementia: a systematic review.](#)

This systematic review aimed to explore the process of decision-making for nutrition and hydration for people living with dementia from the perspectives and experiences of all involved. The decision-making process regarding nutrition and hydration for people living with dementia does not follow a linear process. It needs an informed, value-sensitive, and collaborative process. However, it is often characterized by unclear procedures and with a lack of support. Decisional support is needed and should be approached in a shared and stepwise manner.

Living Well with Dementia

[Effects of dance on cognitive function in older adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis.](#)

Dance is a mind-body activity that stimulates neuroplasticity. We explored the effect of dance on cognitive function in older adults. Dance probably improves global cognitive function and executive function. However, there is little difference in complex attention, and evidence also suggests little effect on learning and memory. Future research is needed to determine the optimal dose and if dance results in greater cognitive benefits than other types of physical activity and exercise.

[An integrative systematic review of creative arts interventions for older informal caregivers of people with neurological conditions.](#)

We aimed to assess and synthesise the current state of quantitative and qualitative research concerning creative arts interventions for older informal caregivers of people with neurological conditions. The current review revealed all creative interventions focused on caregivers of people living with dementia; subsequently, this identified gaps in the evidence of creative interventions for informal caregivers of other neurological conditions. There are encouraging preliminary data on music and art interventions, however, little data exists on other art forms, e.g., drama, dance. Creative interventions may appeal to many caregivers, offering a range of psycho-social benefits. The findings of the current review open the way for future research to develop appropriate and creative arts programmes and to test their efficacy with robust tools.

Physical Activity and Ageing

[Facilitators and challenges in delivering a peer-support physical activity intervention for older adults: a qualitative study with multiple stakeholders.](#)

Involving peer volunteers in intervention delivery can provide social support and improve adherence. Whilst such interventions have the potential to reduce physical activity (PA) intervention costs, little is known about the process of delivering them in practice. This qualitative study explored the facilitators and challenges of delivering a peer-support PA intervention for older adults, with a view to making recommendations for the delivery of future interventions. Peer volunteers can provide an additional support mechanism alongside qualified instructors for increasing social interaction within PA interventions. For optimal intervention delivery, consideration needs to be given to equipment and space, safety and accountability and consistency of practice.

Mental Health and Ageing

[Frailty and depression predict instrumental activities of daily living in older adults: A population-based longitudinal study using the CARE75+ cohort.](#)

To evaluate if depression contributes, independently and/or in interaction with frailty, to loss of independence in instrumental activities of daily living (ADL) in older adults with frailty. Frailty and depression are independently associated with reduced independence in instrumental activities of daily living. Also, depression interacts with frailty to further reduce independence for mild to moderately frail individuals, suggesting that clinical management of frailty should integrate physical and mental health care.

Multiple Long Term Conditions and Frailty

[Problems faced by people living at home with dementia and incontinence: causes, consequences and potential solutions.](#)

Many people living at home with dementia (PLWD) also have poorly managed toilet-use or incontinence problems with damaging consequences for both people with dementia, unpaid carers and healthcare professionals (HCPs). Currently, there are no theoretically or empirically based interventions to help. The underlying causes and subsequent consequences of these problems need to be fully understood in order to support the development of interventions that have the potential to decrease the impact of these problems on people's lives.

[Regional patterns and trends of hearing loss in England: evidence from the English longitudinal study of ageing \(ELSA\) and implications for health policy.](#)

Hearing loss (HL) is a significant public health concern globally and is estimated to affect over nine million people in England. The aim of this research was to explore the regional patterns and trends of HL in a representative longitudinal prospective cohort study of the English population aged 50 and over. We used the full dataset (74,699 person-years) of self-reported hearing data from all eight Waves of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) (2002-2017). A sociospatial approach is crucial for planning sustainable models of hearing care based on actual needs and reducing hearing health inequalities. The Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) currently responsible for the NHS audiology services in England should not consider HL an inevitable accompaniment of older age; instead, they should incorporate socio-economic factors and modifiable lifestyle behaviours for HL within their spatial patterning in England.

Ageism and Discrimination

[Rehabilitation for people with dementia: a multi-method study examining knowledge and attitudes.](#)

People with dementia are not routinely offered rehabilitation services despite experiencing disability associated with the condition and accumulating evidence for therapies such as exercise, occupational therapy, and cognitive or physical rehabilitation. It is important to understand the needs and preferences of people with dementia regarding rehabilitation services. There are gaps following diagnosis where people with dementia report having to seek out their own services. Some interview participants (who tended to be younger) clearly articulated the need for tailored interventions which maximised independence and quality of life.