

Overview of Results from the Evaluation of Initiative #3: Increase in Public Awareness, Information and Education

Ontario's Strategy for Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementias

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BACKGROUND

Through Initiative #3 of Ontario's Strategy for Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementias, new funding was provided to hire Public Education Coordinators (PECs) in each Alzheimer Society Chapter across the province. The primary roles of the PECs are:

- i) to undertake public education activities in order to raise awareness of Alzheimer Disease and related dementias (ADRD);
- ii) to recruit volunteers for Alzheimer Chapters and long-term care service agencies;
- iii) to develop and facilitate support groups; and
- iv) to coordinate training events for staff, volunteers, caregivers and others.

The evaluation of the PEC role included a number of activities. Results from these activities are reported in detail elsewhere. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the evaluation of this initiative and highlight the key results.

OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION

The following table provides a summary of the evaluation activities undertaken in evaluating the PEC role. Table 2 indicates which aspects of the PEC role each evaluation activity targeted.

Table 1: Overview of Evaluation Activities

Evaluation Activity (Time Frame)	Purpose & Methods
Units of Service (2002-03) (2003-04)	<i>Purpose:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">to provide information on how/where the PEC spends time (i.e., proportion of time spent with each target group, proportion of time spent in each of the PEC roles) <i>Method:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">standardized data collection tool completed by PEC and submitted annually
Evaluation of Educational Activities (Fall 2003 & Winter 2004)	<i>Purpose:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">to obtain feedback from individuals who participated in educational activities undertaken by the PECs during select time periods <i>Method:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">standardized questionnaires developed for each target audience (i.e., public, caregivers, persons with dementia, service providers, students and volunteers)questionnaires administered to participants in all sessions held during specified time periods
Survey of PECs and Alzheimer Chapter Executive Directors (Spring 2003)	<i>Purpose:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">to gather information on the types of activities undertaken by the PECs and the role they play in their organizations <i>Method:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">survey conducted with PECs and Executive Directors from Alzheimer Society Chapters

Table 2: Evaluation Activity Target Areas

Evaluation Activity	PEC Role Target Area				
	Education	Awareness	Recruitment & Training of Volunteer	Client / Caregiver Support	Community Consultation
Units of Service	X	X	X	X	X
Evaluation of Educational Activities	X		X		
Survey of PECs and Alzheimer Chapter Executive Directors	X	X	X	X	X

HIGHLIGHTS OF EVALUATION RESULTS

The following highlights some of the key results from the evaluation of the PEC role. These results have been summarized according to the components of the PEC role. It should be noted that the role of the PEC varies across the province depending on the needs of each community and the resources available within each Alzheimer Chapter. Therefore, not all PECs are involved in each of the PEC roles.

Highlights related to the PECs' Education Role

- In 2003-04, 30% of the PECs' time was spent on education activities, 30% on awareness activities, 18% on client and caregiver support, 16% on community consultation, and 5% on recruitment and training of volunteers.
- In terms of their educational activities, 33% of the PECs' time was spent educating members of the public, 22% educating caregivers, 19% educating staff in long-term care (LTC) homes, 13% educating service providers in community agencies, and 14% educating other service providers.
- During the evaluation of the PECs' educational activities, 101 education sessions were conducted with members of the public. A total of 1447 participants completed the feedback form. The average rating of understanding of the session topic increased from 2.7 before the session to 4.0 after the session. (Ratings based on a 5-point scale where 1= "poor" and 5= "excellent".)
 - Ninety percent of participants said they had a better understanding of ADRD as a result of the session they attended; another 8% said they had a "somewhat" better understanding of ADRD.
- A total of 81 education sessions were conducted with caregivers during the evaluation of the PECs' educational activities. A total of 598 individuals completed the feedback form. The average rating of understanding of the session topic increased from 2.7 before the session to 4.1 after the session. (Ratings based on a 5-point scale where 1= "poor" and 5= "excellent".)
 - Two-thirds of the respondents reported that the information in the session would help them "a great deal" in supporting or caring for their relative/friend with ADRD; another 29% said it would help them "to some extent".

- Five sessions were conducted with persons with dementia during the evaluation of the PECs' educational activities. A number of "mixed" sessions (i.e., sessions that included persons with dementia as well as other individuals) were also conducted. All of the individuals with dementia were invited to provide feedback on the session. Caregivers were welcomed to assist them with completing the questionnaire when needed. A total of 39 individuals completed evaluation forms.
 - The average rating of understanding of the topic was 2.9 before the session and 3.7 after the session. (Ratings based on a 5-point scale where 1= "poor" and 5= "excellent".)
 - Eighty-seven percent of respondents indicated that the information presented in the session was helpful to them.
- A total of 172 education sessions were conducted with service providers during the evaluation of the PECs' educational activities. Feedback forms were completed by 2152 participants. The average rating of understanding of the topic area increased from 2.9 before the session to 4.1 after the session. (Ratings based on a 5-point scale where 1= "poor" and 5= "excellent".)
 - Ratings of confidence in participant's ability to care for persons with ADRD increased from 3.1 before the session to 4.0 after the session.
 - Fifty-eight percent of participants reported that they planned to change the way they provide care to individuals with dementia as a result of the session.
- During the evaluation of the PECs' educational activities, 76 sessions were conducted with students (typically elementary students). Feedback forms were completed by 73 teachers.
 - Almost 99% of the teachers reported that the session helped to raise awareness of ADRD among the students. Ninety-five percent reported that the session raised student awareness of the needs of persons with dementia and 81% reported that it raised awareness of the needs of those who care for persons with dementia.
 - The average rating of the overall value of the session was 4.6 or between "very good" and "excellent". (Ratings based on a 5-point scale where 1= "poor" and 5= "excellent".)

Highlights related to the PECs' Awareness Role

- In terms of the PECs' awareness activities, 44% of their time was spent on telephone inquiries, 20% on information booths, and 19% on face-to-face inquiries. Other awareness activities included email inquiries and mass media events (e.g., newspaper articles, newsletters and radio).

Highlights related to the PECs' Role in Providing Client and Caregiver Support

- As indicated above, approximately 18% of the PECs' time was spent providing support to clients and caregivers. This included approximately 65% of time on individual and family consultation and 35% of time on caregiver support groups.

- In the 2003 survey of PECs and Alzheimer Chapter Executive Directors:
 - 73% of PECs reported that they provide occasional education to support groups;
 - 55% reported that they facilitated support groups;
 - 25% were involved in the recruitment of volunteers to facilitate support groups; and
 - 23% trained volunteers to facilitate support groups.

Highlights related to the PECs' Role in Providing Community Consultation

- Approximately 16% of the PECs' time was spent on community consultation. Of this, 30% related to local Dementia Network activities and 70% to other networking activities.
- In the survey of PECs and Alzheimer Chapter Executive Directors, 63% of PECs reported being involved in their local Dementia Network. The type of involvement included being a member of the Steering Committee (86%) and being a member of a subcommittee (77%).
- The majority of PECs reported that they link with the Psychogeriatric Resource Consultant in their area. Examples of the ways they link include: sharing resources; conducting joint educational sessions; and serving together on committees.

Highlights related to the PECs' Role in Recruiting and Training Volunteers

- Approximately 5% of the PECs' time was spent on volunteer related activities. Of this, 68% of their time was spent training volunteers and 32% was spent on the recruitment of volunteers.
- Feedback was obtained from 201 volunteers who participated in 30 training sessions during the evaluation of the PECs' educational activities.
- The average rating of understanding of the topic before the session was 2.6 compared with 3.9 after the session. (Ratings based on a 5-point scale where 1= "poor" and 5= "excellent".)
- Rating of confidence in their ability to care for persons with dementia also increased from before the session to after the session. The average confidence rating before the session was 2.8 compared with an average rating of 3.8 after the session. (Ratings based on a 5-point scale where 1= "not at all confident" and 5= "very confident".)
- Similar ratings were found when participants were asked to rate their confidence in working with others who care for persons with dementia. The average rating of confidence before the session was 2.9 and 3.8 after the session. (Ratings based on a 5-point scale where 1= "not at all confident" and 5= "very confident".)
- In the survey of PECs and Alzheimer Chapter Executive Directors, 63% of PECs reported being involved in the recruitment of volunteers. Ninety-six percent of respondents indicated that the PEC position had helped to increase the number of volunteers recruited.

Overall Ratings of Success of the PEC Role

- In the 2003 survey of PEC and Alzheimer Chapter Executive Directors, the average rating of success of the initiative was 5.9 (using a 7-point scale where 1= “not at all successful” and 7= “extremely successful”).

Benefits of the PEC Role reported by PECs and Alzheimer Chapter Executive Directors

- Examples of benefits of the PEC role include:
 - increased number of education sessions provided;
 - increased number of clients served;
 - increased number of support groups; and
 - increased number of volunteers.

Challenges faced related to the PEC Role

- Examples of challenges related to the PEC role include:
 - time constraints (e.g., meeting the high demand for education requests, splitting time between education and other activities such as client/caregiver support);
 - clarity of role, avoiding overlap with other providers; and
 - size of region / travel time.

Concluding Comments

The primary roles of the PECs are:

- i) to undertake public education activities in order to raise awareness of Alzheimer Disease and related dementias (ADRD);
- ii) to recruit volunteers for Alzheimer Chapters and long-term care service agencies;
- iii) to develop and facilitate support groups; and
- iv) to coordinate training events for staff, volunteers, caregivers and others.

Results from the evaluation of Initiative #3 demonstrate the value of the PEC role, particularly in the area of education. The PECs have been actively involved in educating members of the public, caregivers, individuals with dementia, service providers, students, and volunteers. They have also contributed to other activities within their Alzheimer Chapters and their broader communities (e.g., involvement in local Dementia Networks and collaborating with local Psychogeriatric Resource Consultants). While some challenges still exist with respect to the increasing demands on the PECs' time and issues related to role clarity, overall, the evaluation results support the benefit of this role.

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