

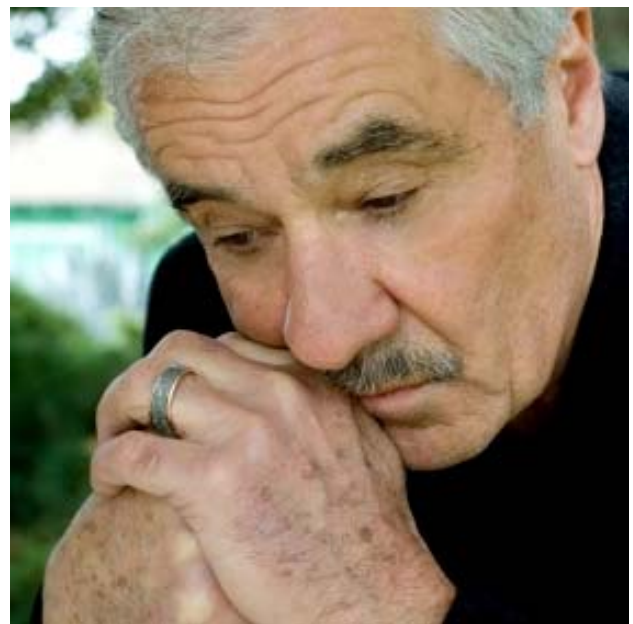
# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## Depression in the Twilight Years

**Dr Tanya Covic, Dr Adelma Hills, Associate Professor Rocco Crino and Dr Helen Correia of the School of Psychology are researching the success of a depression intervention program in residential aged-care facilities (RACFs). This research is being conducted in collaboration with the Bankstown General Practice Division Inc (BGPD) and is a BGPD funding initiative.**

'The prevalence of depression in aged care facilities is estimated to be up to 30 percent in facilities where only a low level of care is needed and 51 percent in high care facilities', says Dr Covic. 'Although depression among the elderly is common, it is not normal and, therefore, it is important that interventions for depression are made available to such individuals. Elderly people may experience a loss of their independence, family and friends. They also experience a decline in their cognitive and physical abilities, and are faced with thoughts of their encroaching mortality. If those individuals are also experiencing depression, their quality of life may be further reduced. We are developing and evaluating a group intervention program in RACFs which aims to reduce residents' depression and improve their sense of well-being, through increasing their activity levels. Individuals in these RACFs are of an advanced age that is under-represented in both research and intervention programs on depression. This project will provide an opportunity to contribute to both of those areas as well as engage with the local services such as the BGPD and RACFs.'

An intervention program will be designed for groups of 4 to 6 residents to be completed in several one hour sessions (including a review) across RACFs in Western Sydney, with these sessions including: linking thoughts, feelings and behaviour; planning positive activities; problem solving and overcoming barriers; and building positive social skills and relationships. Program sessions will be supervised by Dr Correia and predominantly delivered by the



intern psychologists with the School of Psychology. A facilitator will run the sessions and a co-facilitator will observe and collect data before and after the sessions and at a one month follow up. The program will be evaluated in terms of clinical changes and participants' satisfaction with the sessions.

Encouraging elderly people in RACFs to maintain positive activities, no matter how small, as part of their day-to-day lives is important. This can help contribute to their better mental, emotional and physical health, as well as developing more enjoyable lives for themselves.

**Project Title:** Depression Intervention Program in Residential Aged Care Facilities: Bankstown GP Division Aged Care Access Initiative  
**Funding has been set at:** \$44,824  
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