

Making Hospitals Better – Intergenerational Activities in an Acute Setting

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'Thank you for helping me to forget my pain for a few hours' (patient)



In order to tackle some of the negative impacts of hospitalisation on older persons, we plan to imbed Intergenerational Activities (IGA) into our hospitals. Bringing older people and children together is a cheap and effective way to provide significant benefits to both generations.

Introduction

Globally, the number of older persons is expected to increase to 2 billion by 2050⁽¹⁾. As a result, older people hospital admissions are increasing⁽²⁾.

Hospitalisation negatively impacts older people⁽¹⁾. Unfortunately, up to 60%^(3, 4) can suffer from general functional decline, independent to what they were admitted with⁽¹⁾. This leads to a reduction in independence, increased readmission rates, nursing home placements and overall increase in mortality⁽⁵⁾.

Risk factors associated with this decline include the hospital environment, which can exacerbate disorientation (particularly in patients with dementia)⁽¹⁾ and cause delirium. Delirium results in longer hospital admissions and a tenfold increase in mortality, if left untreated⁽⁶⁾. Hospital environments also disrupt sleep, increase the likelihood of falls and lead to social isolation⁽¹⁾. Social isolation is strongly correlated with a decline in physical and mental health and a subsequent increase in mortality⁽⁷⁾. Hospitalisation for older patients also increases the risk of developing depressed psycho-physiology function and of sustaining medical intervention as a result of these symptoms⁽⁸⁾.

Potential Solution-Intergenerational Activities:

IGA bring two generations together for mutual benefit.

Benefits to **older people** include: increased mental capabilities, reduced depression, reduced isolation, an increase in sense of well-being and sense of contribution to society^(9, 10, 11, 12, 13).

Benefits for **children** include: improved communication skills, respect for older adults and understanding of the ageing population and community^(9, 11, 12, 13).

Our Journey

The Pilot

1. Literature Review

2. Identify Aims:

1. Can IGA be used to combat social isolation and create well-being in older people and people with dementia?
2. Can children benefit from IGA?
3. Enhance relationships between paediatrics and older people services.

3. Plan Pilot Event

Seek advice from infection control
Seek consent from schools and wards
Create partnerships with the community

4. Run Pilot Event

Ten 6-7 years old children from local school
Seven medically-stable older people inpatients

5. Collect Data

Qualitative data collection using:
- Pre and post event questionnaires
- Photographs

6. Outcome

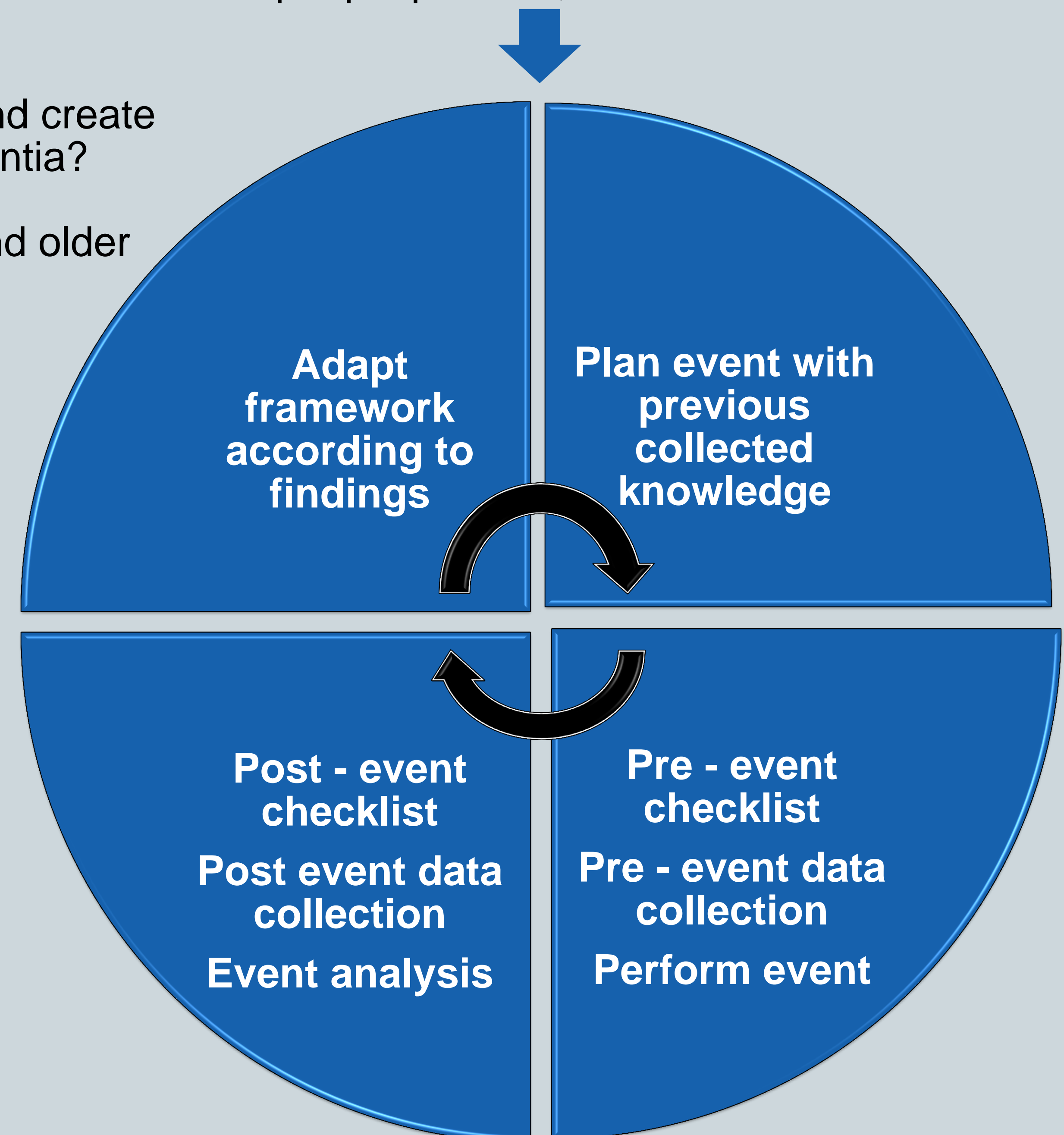
Older people – Improved mood and communication and a reduction in pain perception. Patient's with dementia benefitted the most. **Children** – Improved perception of hospitals and older people. **Staff** – Significant enjoyment.



The Imperial Intergenerational Project

Aim:

Imbed IGA at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust and provide benefits to the older people patients, children and staff.



Intended Outcome:

Sustainable framework to support safe Intergenerational Activity in Acute Hospitals to:
Improve person – centred care
Improve distressed behaviour, low mood and social isolation in older persons
Improve patient experience
Improve staff enjoyment and engagement
Improve children's perceptions of older people and hospitals.

References – please see handout.