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The National Dementia strategy: Making it culturally competent for all

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We welcomed the National Service Framework with great enthusiasm as response to improving the less than optimal quality of services experienced by older people and a step in the right direction for increasing the capacity of services. Furthermore, it represented a significant consideration by the government to embrace compassionate care in the NHS in the face of the numbers growing older less healthy. It is now time to move the goal post given the need to be more responsive to the diverse multicultural demographics of the UK and the significant numbers of those living with dementia.

Health commissioners and professionals are finally recognizing now more than ever the importance and timely need to reconfigure older people services away from services previously and suitably set in mono-cultural population settings. This is about providing culturally competent services/care (globalised care) that fits and underpins the challenge to ensure that the Human Rights of all citizens to equal access to good health care is met as enshrined in legislation. Cultural competence is the vehicle that can ensure the commissioning and delivery of health and social care services is done in a manner that meets the complete complement of assessed needs of a locality based on its demographics and those of the individual based on their specific cultural background. This is not about race. It is about ensuring that those affected by Alzheimer's and dementia have access to care which they or their carers agree will help them maintain 'self'.

The question to answer is how do we make the National Dementia Strategy and the Older Peoples Service Framework culturally competent enough to ensure that not only are the inconsistencies in services addressed but those who are affected by these diseases live well, are supported well and die well no matter what their cultural affiliations are?.

Biography

Tiwalola Kolapo has completed a Master's degree in Social Policy in Social Policy from the Middlesex University and worked as a commissioner of health services for the NHS for over 15years. She is currently studying for a doctorate in mental health at Middlesex University looking at the challenges and opportunities for commissioning culturally competent Dementia services.

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