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THE KIDS4DEMENTIA EDUCATION PROGRAM AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS IN IMPROVING CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

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Abstract:

Objectives: Improving attitudes towards dementia among the next generation is essential for developing inclusive dementia-friendly communities. The aim of this presentation is to describe Kids4dementia, an education program for children on dementia; and report on its feasibility and effectiveness in improving children's understanding of dementia.

Methods: The classroom-based dementia education program presents 10-12 year olds with the engaging animated story of Ollie a 10-year old boy, Ruby his 12-year-old sister, and their grandfather - who they have noticed start to act a little different to usual. The seven short modules - including film of consumers speaking candidly about the condition - cover topics such as: "How does it feel to have dementia?", and "What can I do?". Each module is accompanied by an activity, such as an interactive brain, discussion, role-play, or drawing. The randomised waitlist-controlled pilot will assign one school to complete the Kids4dementia program over one term (12 weeks), and one school to waitlist control. All children (N = 544) will complete the purposefully developed "Kids' Insight Into Dementia Survey" (KIIDS) at the beginning and end of the 12 weeks. The waitlist school will engage in no dementia-related curricular for the first 12 weeks, and will receive Kids4dementia the following term.

Results: Multi-level modelling (controlling for degree of familiarity with people with dementia) will determine whether the intervention group showed greater improvement in knowledge and attitudes towards people with dementia than the waitlist group. Preliminary results will be available March 2016. Teacher/student program feedback, and key themes identified within children's activity sheets will also be presented.

Conclusions/Perspectives: This is the world's first randomised-controlled study of an accessible, school curriculum-aligned, evidence-based educational dementia program for children. Findings will inform program feasibility, effectiveness and refinement; and form the basis of a future nationwide randomised-controlled trial.

Keywords: dementia education, children, awareness