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Brooke, Joanne (2016) Impact of a dementia friendly ward environment on the care nurses provide for patients: a qualitative study. In: RCN International Nursing Research Conference, 6-8 Apr 2016, Edinburgh, UK. (Unpublished)

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**ACCEPTED FOR PRESENTATION AT:**

**RCN International Nursing Research Conference 2016**

**Impact of a dementia friendly ward environment on the care nurses provide for patients: A qualitative study.**

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### **Background**

The Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) has launched the 'Dementia Friendly Hospital Charter' (2014). The creation of a dementia friendly ward should help to reduce the 'care burden' of dementia for staff (Andrews 2013). Nurses have reported striving to achieve good care, but felt this was not always possible (Cowdell 2010). However, there is a lack of evidence on the impact of ward environment changes on the care nurses provide for patients with dementia.

### **Aim**

To explore the impact of dementia friendly environment ward changes for nurses caring for patients with dementia.

### **Method:**

Data were collected from healthcare assistants (HCAs) and registered nurses (RN) working on elderly care wards within an acute NHS Foundation Trust in the UK. Nurses' perspectives were explored via focus groups. The interview schedule was based on information from a pilot group and previous literature. Data were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

### **Results:**

Between September and October 2015 focus groups (n=10) were completed with HCAs (n=3), RN (n=2) and mixed (n=5), with a total of 38 staff. Focus groups lasted between 25 to 32 minutes.

Emergent themes included: 1) person-centred care, 2) understanding environment changes, 3) need for a change in staff culture, and 4) positive and negative elements of environment changes.

### **Discussion**

Person-centred care emerged as a priority over environment changes. Staff discussed the importance of a culture shift and the need to embrace a different approach to caring. Positive impacts of the dementia friendly ward supported this process, such as a cinema room, implementation of the care crew and a regular reminiscence activity. Some elements were disputed as supporting patients, but did provide the impression of a non-hospital environment. Minor changes to the environment were recommended.