

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## Keeping older people independent

**Dr Elizabeth Halcomb and Professor Rhonda Griffiths from the Family & Community Health Research Group are collaborating with Dr Stewart Sloggett from the Schwarz Family Practice to develop a model of care that will support and maintain ageing individuals within the community setting through an Australian Research Council Linkage award.**

'With Australia's ageing population on the increase, it is important to identify the type of support required to enable people to remain living in the community independently for as long as possible', says Dr Halcomb. 'Over eighty per cent of Australians aged 65 and older have three or more chronic diseases that lead to a decline in their health. Most existing programs aimed at supporting community dwelling older people deliver assistance with daily living activities. The community carers providing this support are well placed to identify changes in a person's health status and alert their GP. Such early intervention when an older person's health deteriorates may reduce the likelihood of their admission to an emergency department or residential care'.

The research team will develop and test a simple action plan involving Telehealth - a system of health care that enables physicians to examine patients from a remote location using computer and telephone facilities. Practice nurses and community carers will be able to use Telehealth for ongoing monitoring of at risk people living in the community and will use identified triggers to rapidly refer an older person to their GP for early intervention.



The project will offer significant economic, health and social benefits by promoting and maintaining good health for aged people who have chronic diseases by enhancing service delivery by general practitioners, practice nurses and community carers.

**Project Title:** A Model of Integrated Care for Dependant Older People Living in the Community

**Research Partners:** Carrington Centennial Care Ltd, Tunstall Australasia Pty Ltd and Schwarz Family Practice

**Funding has been set at:** \$99,220

**Contact Details:** e.halcomb@uws.edu.au  
<http://www.uws.edu.au/fach>

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