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Learning from the increasing diversity in ageing

To discuss ageing in the twenty-first century now means recognising many new voices and groups as having distinctive experiences of ageing with international resonance. Some of this change and diversity is reflected in the papers presented in this issue. Gary Hodge reminds us that demographic changes may bring some, perhaps but certainly regrettable, consequences as increases in suicide rates are now highest in people aged over 75, while research is lacking on the contribution of psychosocial factors linked to co-morbidities and age discrimination. Potential psychosocial benefits of applications for a theory of perceptual control to support the abilities of people living with dementia are indicated in the practice paper by McEvoy *et al.*

Challenges to age discrimination through intergenerational learning are offered by two practice papers in this issue. Gonçalves *et al.* present evidence from their Portugal-based programme, that such learning can have a longer-term impact. In the UK, the power of an intergenerational interactive learning event, in this case to engage schoolchildren and stroke survivors to encourage their mutual understanding is similarly detailed by Lane.

Other contemporary trends include the increasing domination of care provision by corporate for-profit organisations, increasing the risk that judgements of quality in this care sector become less resident-centred. Such sectoral changes in New Zealand are examined by Jaye *et al.* who contest any encouragement to overemphasise safety at the expense of residents' dignity and culture including, here, indigenous Maori culture. A countervailing example provided this time from non-government not-for-profit organisations may be provided by the England-based research carried out by Jasper *et al.* of information and advice provision on care coordination. This revealed the emphasis being given to care and support planning by such organisations and the diversity of care coordination activities being carried out in this sector, with such diversity perhaps amplified by website provision.

Finally, a critical reflection from Canada (Booi *et al.*) is offered following recent World Young Leaders in Dementia events held in Japan. They argue strongly for how a more prompt uptake of research evidence will be encouraged by taking into account contextual factors such as the local settings for action. As developing countries come to share some of the trends to increase in their ageing populations, as seen some decades earlier in more developed countries, while innovations may be shared, the importance of actively learning from these emerging action contexts will also need to be recognised, respected and reflected in research. Learning about contemporary ageing means being prepared to engage with some of the new learning partners identified in the research and practice reported in the papers in this issue.