

Short report: ELDAC Digital Dashboard trial

To support aged care workers in planning and providing good quality palliative and end of life care, the ELDAC team at Flinders University created an integrated palliative care web platform known as the ELDAC Digital Dashboard (the Dashboard).

Introduction

The dashboard is an integrated palliative care web platform developed based on the Aged Care quality standards, the National Palliative Care Standards, and the evidence based ELDAC Care model. The ultimate aim of the dashboard is to build workforce capability around palliative care so older Australians receive person centered care at the end of their lives. One of the unique abilities of the dashboard is that it uses existing data that is captured within an aged care service's Clinical Data Management System (CDMS), processes it, and provides a one-stop shop for clinicians to graphically view and track all relevant End of Life (EOL) care activities and processes of their residents/clients. There is no need to feed data to the dashboard, which makes it ideal for integration into existing CDMS as opposed to being a standalone piece of software with additional management and application requirements.

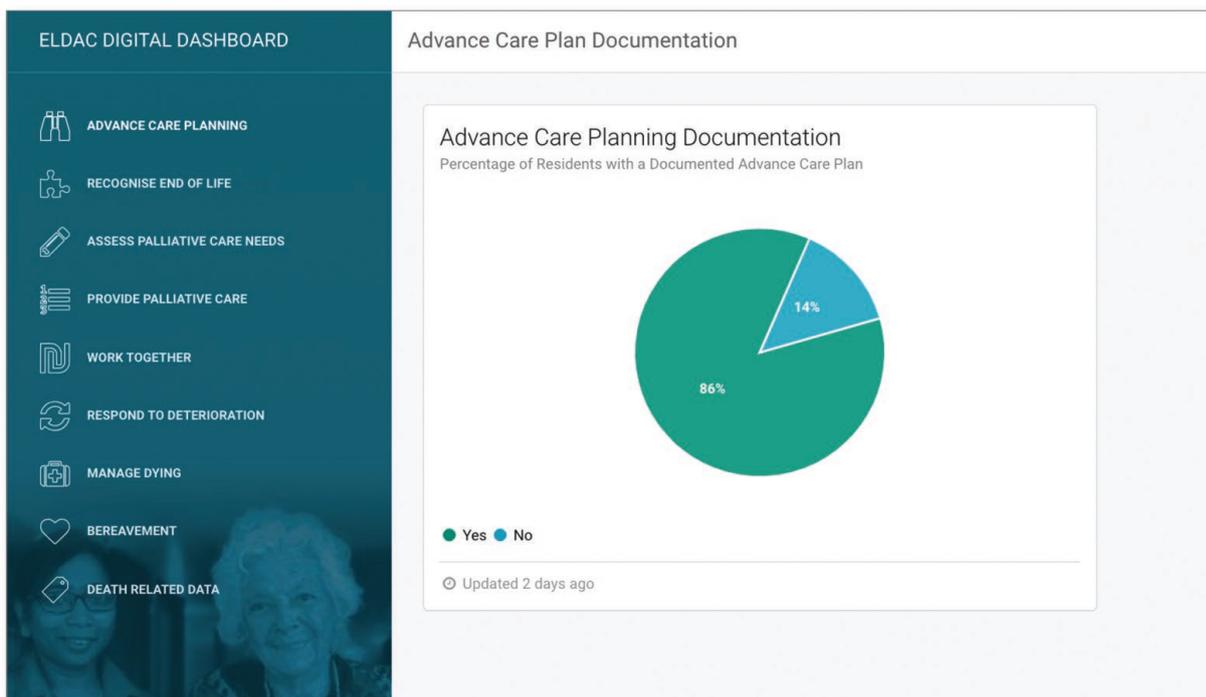


Figure: Snapshot of the ELDAC Digital Dashboard prototype

Dashboard integration and implementation

The dashboard has been integrated into the systems of four aged care IT providers that offer their system/platform to various residential and home care services across Australia. We took this opportunity to examine how the dashboard would function in the real-world setting, and what aged care clinicians thought of this novel technology. In the second half of 2020, we conducted a 3-month implementation evaluation study involving services that had access to the newly integrated dashboard. Care managers, nurses and even admin staffs used the dashboard for up to 8 weeks of trial period with the support of a site based 'Dashboard champion'.

Trial results

At the end of the trial period, over 40 staff members from 14 sites participated in a focus group or interview sessions to share their experience of dashboard use. The dashboard was useful and relevant to the care practices of the aged care setting and staff felt that it helped them organise end of life care. While the dashboard was used in an extremely challenging period marked by COVID19 concerns, time and resource pressures, competing priorities, and a relatively low-level of technology readiness within the sector; staff and managers reported that the engagement with the dashboard facilitated family conversations about a resident's decline and care needs. This appeared particularly when recognition of gradual EOL decline was clearly presented to the team.

The dashboard's ability to show what is happening at the client level, as well as service level, was found to be useful by care managers for the purposes of audit, compliance and to assure accountability in the EOL processes provided at their service. For services where the role of EOL and palliative care were still evolving, having access to the associated suite of ELDAC resources was also seen as valuable. Having a site based 'Champion' to drive the early implementation and use of the dashboard was seen as crucial. These findings are very promising and show that technological innovations such as the ELDAC Digital dashboard can support staff and services in identifying and responding to an older person's needs as they move into the last months, or year, of life as well as responding to specific palliative care needs.

For more information about the ELDAC digital dashboard please contact eldac.project@flinders.edu.au