

## DTSC survey of Social Workers

In 2012, the Queensland Dementia Training Study Centre (QLD DTSC) conducted a national online survey of Social Workers (SW), along with Occupational Therapists and Diversional Therapists to identify their key dementia education and training needs. The key findings are summarised below.

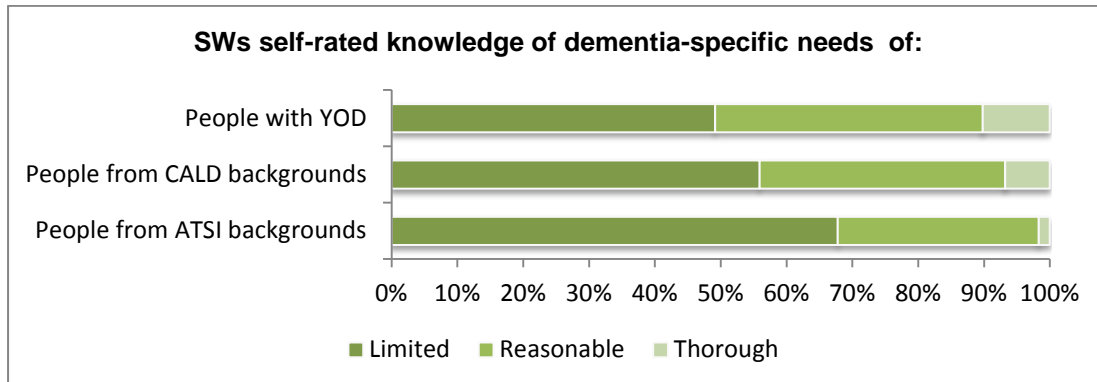
### Respondents (N=59):

- Were primarily from WA - 54% and QLD - 27%
- Mostly worked in metropolitan areas - 78%
- Worked in a range of settings - acute care (44%), community (22%), RACF (12%), multiple care (12%) and transition care (8%)
- 36% had a post-graduate qualification, most frequently a Master's degree

### Self-rated dementia specific knowledge

Respondents self-rated their current knowledge of 20 items including aspects of dementia such as types, stages, prevalence; practice related knowledge such as BPSD, falls prevention and ADL; and the needs of specific groups to three levels (limited, reasonable or thorough). They also ranked the level of importance of knowledge of each item to their current role; not important, important or essential.

Social Workers said they had a limited knowledge about the dementia-specific needs of people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds as well as people with Younger onset Dementia (YOD). At the same time 85-95% of respondents considered such knowledge as important or essential to their current role.



SW's also said they had a limited knowledge about:

- Diagnosis and assessment - 36%
- Stages of dementia - 31%
- Differentiating between dementia, delirium and depression - 29%

...while 93-100% considered such knowledge as important or essential to their current role

SW's also said they had a limited knowledge about:

- A palliative approach and end of life care - 27%
- Advanced care planning - 24%

...while 95% considered such knowledge as important or essential to their current role.

Supporting family caregivers of people living with dementia and BPSD were considered the most essential for their role; 100%, 95% and 88%, respectively, said their knowledge in these areas was reasonable or thorough.

### Preferred education topics & methods

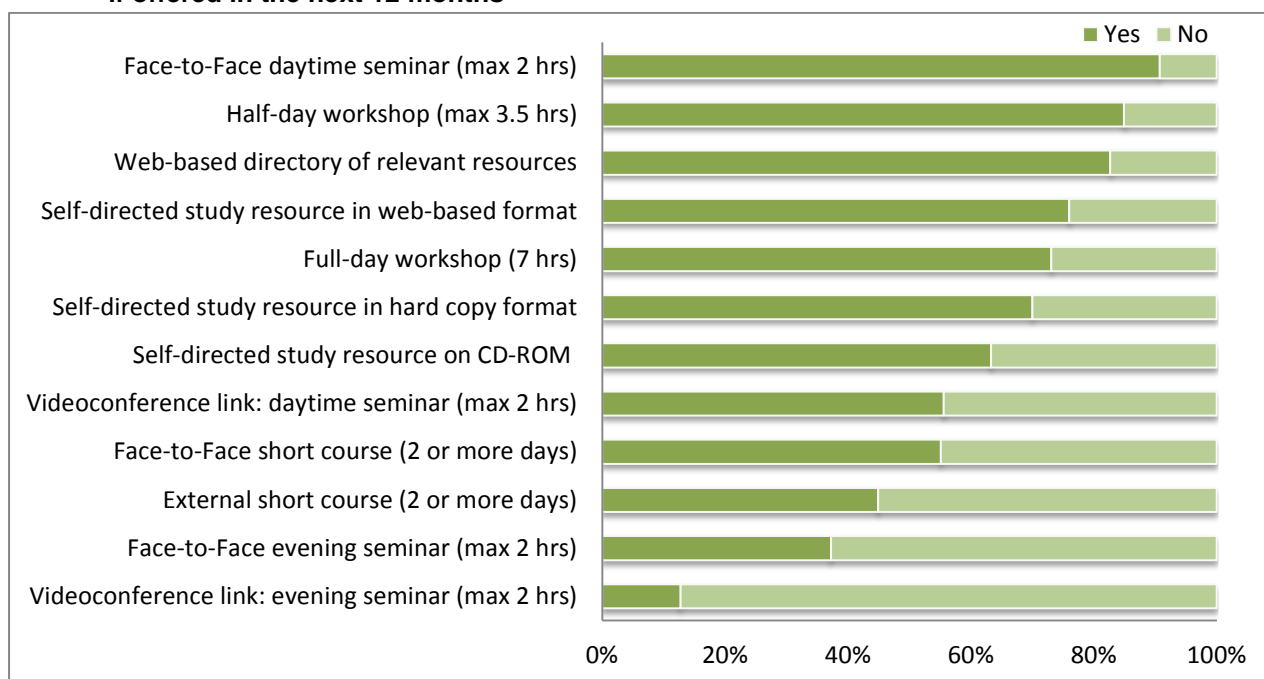
The most frequently requested topics for further education and training were:

- Supporting families and carers (n=19) including at point of diagnosis and resources available in the community
- About dementia (n=19) including stages, types, trajectories, diagnosis and assessment
- Behaviour management or interventions (n=16)
- Advanced care planning, capacity assessment (n=10)
- Palliative approach and end of life care (n=6)
- Younger onset Dementia (n=6)
- Dementia and mental health/ brain injury/alcohol and drug use (n=6)

The most popular methods of learning were face-to-face daytime seminars, half-day workshops and a web-based directory of relevant resources, followed by self-directed study resources - online web-based format and full-day workshops.

Some respondents also commented on access issues particularly lack of staff to provide cover and lack of funding for travel.

### Training methods and resource types most likely to be used by Social Workers if offered in the next 12 months



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## **In summary**

The survey identified:

- the need for education about the dementia-specific needs of people from ATSI and CALD backgrounds and those with Younger Onset Dementia
  - the need for education about a range of topics including - dementia basics, differentiating between dementia, delirium and depression, a palliative approach and end of life care and advanced care planning, support for family caregivers of people living with dementia, behaviour management/ interventions and mental health/ substance abuse related co-morbidities
  - a preference for practice area and profession specific education and training.
  - a preference for face-to-face training methods (part day) and on-line resources
  - the need for a range of training methods including self-directed learning
  - access is an issue for those in rural and remote areas and part time workers
  - further dementia specific education and training was seen as valuable to assist in their current work role
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