

ASX RELEASE

Uptake of new PainChek® app drives better quality aged care

Friday 28th September 2018: The roll out of a new app that runs via a smart phone and uses artificial intelligence to assess pain levels in real time is driving better quality aged care in residential settings around Australia.

Better detection and management of pain has long been associated with high quality aged care¹. Now the roll out of PainChek® (ASX:PCK) is allowing staff at residential aged care facilities to detect, measure and monitor pain through the facial analysis of a short 3 second video captured via their smart phone. The app automatically recognizes facial muscle movements that indicate pain. When this result is combined with other non-facial cues captured through the app, a total pain score and pain intensity are provided.

Professor Jeff Hughes, Chief Scientific Officer at PainChek says many people with dementia do not have their pain managed optimally and that it is a focus on improving the quality of resident care that is driving the adoption of the device.

“Pain often goes unrecognised and under-treated in people with advanced dementia who can no longer communicate that they are in pain. Currently available pain assessment tools can be subject to user bias and generally paper-based, as a result they are under-utilized. PainChek® has been shown to accurately assess pain, which facilitates better pain management, leading to reduced pain related behavioural issues in those living with dementia. With its wider adoption we are hearing from carers PainChek® is easy to use” said Prof Hughes

By early September 2018 PainChek® Ltd had secured 20 residential aged care clients across Australia who are using the device under license. This represents more than 1,500 Australian aged care beds and more than 6,500 assessments completed under license.

Residential Care Services in South Australia was one of the first aged care networks to start using PainChek®. General Manager Matt Kowald says there is evidence of reduced prescribing of anti-psychotic medications for residents since they introduced PainChek®.

“PainChek® gives us a tool to be able to quantify pain for people who cannot reliably tell us if they have pain. It has also created awareness in staff to consider other approaches to the management of behaviour which in turn has reduced the amount of medication being used for behavioural management and increased the use of simple treatments such as paracetamol, heat packs and massage. Overall it has supported a culture shift in staff to think of managing residents in a more holistic manner”.

According to Ciarán Foley, Chief Executive Officer at Allambie Heights Village Ltd, the device is having a positive impact on the quality of care.

“Following a trial period at our residential aged care facility, we embraced PainChek® and since August 2018 have been using the software with 10 of our residents who have difficulties with communication. Our registered nurses, upon detecting pain using PainChek® are able to respond and intervene with therapeutic warm blankets, to monitor impact and then when needed, to give pain relief medication as needed (e.g. paracetamol). All of our physiotherapists are using PainChek® pre and post massage sessions for pain management and are maintaining records so that we can report and track outcomes. Our registered nurses are communicating the treatment and outcomes with residents’ GPs. Overall, our registered nurses and care staff have observed already over a short period of time, a lower incidence of residents taking medication and some improvement in respective resident reaction/behavior due to our effective pain management responses”.

A recent pilot study with 150 aged care consultants using PainChek (which ended in April 2018) confirmed improvement in behavioural issues of people with dementia.

The PainChek® team continues to educate aged care facilities on the benefits of the device and anticipates significant increased global uptake in coming years.

ENDS

Reference:

1. Interventions targeting pain or behaviour in dementia: A systematic Review. Ageing Research Reviews 12 (2013) 1042– 1055

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