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# Newsletter

**Edition 55** | 28th April 2020

## Editor's Note

Welcome to the first instalment of the HMinfo Newsletter for 2020.

The past few months have been very challenging for the whole world as more than 1 million people have contracted the COVID-19 virus, while the deaths are more than 50,000. In Australia, the COVID-19 virus outbreak succeeded the catastrophic 2019 fires. Apart from the impact on the wellbeing of the people, this unprecedented crisis has caused profound social and economic consequences, which are expected to be more significant in the near future.

Older people and people with health issues are the groups most vulnerable in getting very sick from COVID-19. One of the main measures that seems to have a positive effect on decreasing the number of cases is physical distancing, which naturally leads to self-isolation in one's home. Now more than ever, home modifications prove to be important or even necessary for people with disabilities and older people. Occupational therapists can recommend home modifications and assistive technology solutions for individuals that will increase independence, safety and comfort in the house.

The HMinfo Clearinghouse collected the most important information on how service providers can protect their clients and themselves from the COVID-19 during home visits in a new Industry Factsheet, which will be updated once new guidelines are introduced. The Consumer Factsheet: Arranging Home Modifications, Ed. 2, should always be the guide for older people and people with disability to seek funding and assistance to arrange home modifications.

Until our next newsletter, keep safe!

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# NEW HMinfo RESOURCES

## Industry Factsheet: COVID-19

This factsheet aims to give information on how health professionals and service providers working with older people and people with disability can protect themselves and their clients during the COVID-19 outbreak. The publication is going to be updated frequently during this health emergency.



[Download this resource from the HMinfo website](#)

## Consumer Factsheet: Arranging Home Modifications, Ed. 2

Home modifications increase people's wellbeing and reduce the need for care at home. This publication helps people arrange modifications that will enable them to be safer and more comfortable in their home. The steps to decide which home modifications are the best for your home as well as ways to apply for funding are included.



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## Designing home environments for people who experience problems with cognition and who display aggressive or self-injurious behaviour. Ed. 2

Three HMinfo publications (Evidence Based Practice Review, Industry Factsheet and Consumer Factsheet), addressed to different audiences, provide information to assist people with cognitive impairments and their carers to arrange modifications that will enable them to be safer and more comfortable in their home. Strategies to reduce potential triggers and minimise the risk of property damage and of harm for people are provided.



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## Consumer Factsheet: Bidet douche seats, flexible hoses and bidets

This report informs consumers about the function of bidet douche seats, flexible hoses and bidets and about the hazards associated to non-compliant installations of these fittings in their bathrooms.



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## Other RESOURCES

### A scoping review of home modification interventions—mapping the evidence base

*Carnemolla, P., Bridge, C. (2020) A scoping review of home modification interventions-mapping the evidence base. Indoor and Built Environment, 29(3), 299-310.*

This scoping review aims to map the breadth and scale of the evidence base, identify themes and gaps in the evidence as well as grading home modifications research quality. Seventy-seven studies from 16 countries are included and revealed that home modifications evidence is measured in terms of a diverse range of effects. Seven key themes emerged including: injury and falls prevention; improved function, self-care or independence; physical health and well-being; caregiving; economic effectiveness; ageing process; and social participation. The strongest experimental evidence has been conducted in relation to falls prevention.

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### Can occupational therapist-led home environmental assessment prevent falls in older people? A modified cohort randomised controlled trial protocol

*Cockayne, S., Pighills, A., Adamson, J. on behalf of the OTIS study, et al Can occupational therapist-led home environmental assessment prevent falls in older people? A modified cohort randomised controlled trial protocol. BMJ Open 2018;8:e022488. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2018-022488*

This publication presents the pre-results of a two-arm, modified cohort randomised controlled trial. The study was conducted in England, with 1299 community-dwelling participants aged 65 years and above, who are at an increased risk of falls. Participants will be randomised 2:1 to receive either usual care or home assessment and modification. The primary outcome is rate of falls (falls/person/time) over 12 months assessed by monthly patient self-report falls calendars. The study will also investigate the feasibility of providing the intervention and explore barriers, facilitators, workload implications and readiness to employ these interventions into

routine practice. An economic evaluation will assess value for money in terms of cost per fall averted.

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## **Perspectives on Home Modifications for Accessibility, Affordability, and Aesthetics**

*Struckmeyer, L., Ellison, C., Campbell, N. (2019). Perspectives on Home Modifications for Accessibility, Affordability, and Aesthetics. American Journal of Occupational Therapy, August 2019, Vol. 73, 7311515291.*

### **3 Feb 2020 | Report | Politics, Social issues**

This poster presentation describes a qualitative study which was part of a larger study funded by the US department of Housing and Urban Development. The study participants identified problems related to the safety, flexibility of fixtures and spaces, avoidance of major remodelling, and visibility of fixtures and thresholds in the homes of people with physical or visual limitations. The results of the broader study are expected.

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## **Home Assessments-Improving Patients' Capacity for Self-Management**

*Robinson M., Szanton S.L. (2020). Home Assessments—Improving Patients' Capacity for Self-Management. In: Colburn J., Leff B., Hayashi J., Schuchman M. (eds) Home-Based Medical Care for Older Adults. Springer, Cham*

This book chapter investigates the role of home assessments to the independence and functional performance of older people with multiple medical conditions. The case study of an older person is examined and the significance of the suggestions on the use of adaptive equipment, education regarding symptom management, and home modifications to increase safety and independence are described.

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## **Co-designing a peer support platform for people with low vision and blindness**

*Swinburne Social Innovation Research Institute, DXC Digital Transformation Centre*

This report evaluates the design and development of a prototype Peer Support Platform for people with low vision and blindness. The study established that by careful planning of the design technologies with rather than for people with disabilities, the social outcomes are more significant.

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## OTA Telehealth Guidelines, Checklist and Consent Form Template

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak and changes in delivery of health services, OTA has released these guidelines to support members in their transition to telehealth practice.

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## EVENTS

### Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder: Practical Strategies for Teachers

As more children are being diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), mainstream teachers are increasingly expected to provide appropriate support for students with complex learning needs within mainstream classes.

This workshop places emphasis on understanding how students with ASD perceive the world differently, and how this impacts on their behaviour at school. Participants are encouraged to make subtle changes to their interaction and intervention style to reduce students' anxiety and prevent challenging behaviours. Participants will practice their skills by responding to scenarios in small groups. Course notes include visual aids and proformas that can be adapted to suit your own students.

If you have any queries please don't hesitate to contact by phone on 02 4967 3363 or email us at [autismunderstanding@gmail.com](mailto:autismunderstanding@gmail.com).

[View workshop information and registration forms](#)

Any suggestions or feedback you may have on our newsletter would be greatly appreciated, so please feel free to contact us at [hminfo@unsw.edu.au](mailto:hminfo@unsw.edu.au). To unsubscribe from future HMinfo newsletters, please click [unsubscribe](#).

