

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Resparke music program makes life easier for aged care staff and residents living with dementia**

**An upgraded platform with specially curated music playlists, videos and podcasts is delivering significant benefits in supporting aged care staff to manage dementia behaviour, new ACU research has found.**

Resparke, formally known as Moove & Groove, uses the therapeutic power of music to enrich the lives and change behaviours of aged care residents living with dementia but new research shows aged care staff are also benefiting.

Dr Kirsten Challinor, a senior lecturer in psychology and a neuroscientist researcher at Australian Catholic University, looked at the impact of new upgrades to the Resparke platform in a research project with Twilight Aged Care staff.

The findings will be presented at the International Dementia Conference in Sydney this week.

“There is one element of the research that is truly novel and that is the finding that music and visual content can have an effect on the wellbeing of staff in aged care facilities,” Dr Challinor said. “The most amazing thing is what happens directly after a music therapy session.”

Dementia is the number one killer of women in Australia. Research has shown that musical memory remains intact even when memories of places, words and people have faded.

This means music can be an effective tool to stimulate those with Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia, enabling them to reconnect with old memories and revive emotions and images.

Resparke, available to about 25,000 people living in aged care facilities across Australia and New Zealand, delivers personalised and immersive music and video experiences via wireless headphone technology to evoke positive memories and emotions for people living with dementia in care.

Dr Challinor and her team found that the program improves the wellbeing of care staff along with improved the outcomes for residents.

The new research measured the experience of staff before and after the upgrades. Online survey data was collected from 121 sessions of staff administering Resparke to residents at two Twilight aged care facilities.

Analysis of the research shows the program has had a positive impact on dementia-related change behaviours and reduced vocal disruption, agitation, pacing and apathy.

Staff reported the upgrades to the platform made their job easier, helped them to better connect with residents and increased job satisfaction.

The research found a session of Resparke was 100 per cent successful in eliminating:

- Mild and moderate wandering behaviour
- Mild and moderate physical behaviour
- Mild verbal behaviour and reducing
- Emotional behaviours such as anxiety, agitation, anger, sadness and withdrawal 94 per cent of the time.

Dr Challinor said staff reported they needed to have sufficient profile information to start conversations and select personalised content.

So Resparke implemented several upgrades to the program including an integrated digital intake form to collect relevant resident lifestyle and preference data for staff and family use. A digital profile page for each resident with preference data was also added as well as a content matching engine to provide an automated set of music and video recommendations.

Resparke founder and chief executive Alison Harrington is thrilled with the impact the platform upgrade is having on aged care residents.

“We knew that in order to create impact and reduce behaviours, music or video content needs to be personalised and that’s what we wanted to create at scale with the new Resparke,” she said.

“With a silver tsunami ahead of us and rapid rise in dementia any tool we can provide to carers to assist with their jobs and improve wellbeing of residents is a game changer.

The new research was funded by an Aged Care Research & Industry Innovation Australia grant awarded to the project partnership between Resparke, ACU and Twilight.

Dr Kirsten Challinor is available for interview. [Read the conference presentation of this work here.](#)

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