QUESTION
What is the best available evidence regarding the process of admission to residential aged care?

CLINICAL BOTTOM LINE
Admission should be seen as part of the process of care. The initial assessment interview, when done well, can form the basis for a high quality care plan and establish trust in the nurse-resident relationship. It is, in effect, an acknowledgment that people have social and psychological, as well as physical needs.

- Preventative home visitation programs were effective only if interventions were based on multidimensional geriatric assessment, which included multiple follow-up home visits, and targeted persons at lower risk for death and those who are relatively young. (Level I)
- An epidemiological study showed that dementia, older age, disability, less social support and number of prescription medications were significant predictors of nursing facility admission. (Level III)
- Dementia was shown to be the most powerful predictor of admission with authors finding that adults with dementia had five times the risk of institutionalisation compared to those without dementia. (Level III)
- When compared with usual care it was found that assessment of aged people by a specialist clinician, such as a geriatrician or old age psychiatrist improved the identification of medical conditions likely to affect care, resulting in less nursing home care, less contact with emergency services and less decline in their physical functioning. (Level II)
- Assessment of residents/clients was recognised as the defining phase that determines nursing care for the resident. (Level IV)
- Practitioner knowledge of physical and behavioural sciences was seen as foundational to thorough assessment. (Level IV)
- Ensuring the older adult is significantly involved in making informed choices about accommodation was identified as significant in producing a positive long-term outcome. (Level IV)

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EVIDENCE
This evidence summary is based on a structured search of the literature and selected evidence-based health care databases.

The evidence in this summary comes from:
- A systematic review that included 18 studies involving 13447 individuals aged 65 years and older
- An epidemiological study involving a population-based cohort of 1147 adults, aged 66 and older
- A randomised controlled trial involving 256 older people at risk of care home entry
- A literature review
- An expert opinion article

BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS
The nursing assessment should aim to focus on the resident’s/client’s overall health status to...
ensure the nursing care plan is based on mutually established goals. (Grade B)
• It was recommended the nursing care plan be based on needs identified through discussion with
the resident/client and the nursing process. (Grade B)

References

admission and functional decline in elderly people: systematic review and meta-regression
analysis. JAMA. 2002; 287(8):1022-1028. (Level I)
2. Bharucha AJ, Pandav R, Shen C, Dodge HH. Ganguli M. Predictors of nursing home facility
of specialist clinical assessment of older people prior to entry to care homes. Age Ageing.
2004;33(1):25-34. (Level II)
(Level IV)
5. Nolan M, Walker G, Nolan J, Williams S, Poland F, Curran M. Kent BC. Entry to care:
positive choice or fait accompli? Developing a more proactive nursing response to the needs of