Neighbours' attitudes toward people with disabilities in Melbourne

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Deinstitutionalisation of Kew Residential Services (KRS) residents proceeded group by group and took place from October 2002 to April 2008. Residents relocated into either newly built or pre-purchased houses located across Melbourne. In Australia and other developed countries, limited studies suggest that people with intellectual and physical disabilities relocated into group homes have poor social integration into a community.

This presentation is based upon findings from a quantitative research project aimed to investigate neighbours' attitudes towards people with intellectual and physical disabilities living in the Inner Southern Region of Melbourne, who relocated to group homes after closure of KRS. The administered check list questionnaire contained three main parts, including (1) participants' socio-demographic details, (2) information and strategies neighbours being introduced with the group home people, and (3) the Interaction with Disabled Persons (IDP) Scale. A total number of 290 participants whose properties located in the Inner Southern Region of Melbourne were randomly identified for participation in this study. The collected responses were analysed, applying descriptive statistics, bivariate analyses, trivariate analysis, and multivariate analyses.

The results of bivariate analyses revealed a statistically significant association between frequency of face-to-face contacts with the group home residents and neighbours' attitudes towards them, indicating that neighbours who had contacts with the group home residents on a daily/weekly basis had more positive attitudes towards them than the neighbours who had contacts on a less frequent basis. Other variables that were identified as important in bivariate analysis were age, marital status and employment status, and were used in multivariate analysis.