

## Long-Term Care Survey Alert

### Industry Notes: Get Your Residents 'Tweeting' To Improve Their Cognitive Capacity

Want to help your elderly residents to improve their overall mental health and well-being? Social media could be the cure.

Training older adults to use social media improves cognitive capacity and increases their sense of self-competence, according to a two-year study by the **University of Exeter** and funded by the **European Union**. The study is part of an international project called "Ages 2.0." The researchers gave a group of vulnerable older adults a specially designed computer, broadband connection and training in how to use them.

The study participants especially enjoyed connecting with friends and family via email and Skype, according to a recent university press release. Those who received training became more positive about computers over time.

The researchers discovered that those older adults who received training had increased feelings of self-competence, engaged more in social activity, had a stronger sense of personal identity, and showed improved cognitive capacity. The university surmised that these factors led to overall better mental health and well-being.

Social connections are crucial to cognitive and physical health, and "people who are socially isolated or who experience loneliness are more vulnerable to disease and decline," U.K.-based project leader **Dr. Thomas Morton** of the university's Psychology department said in a recent statement.

"For these reasons, finding ways to support people's social connections is a really important goal," Morton noted. "This study shows how technology can be a useful tool for enabling social connections, and that supporting older people in our community to use technology effectively can have important benefits for their health and well-being."

For more on the study, go to [www.ages2.eu/en](http://www.ages2.eu/en).

### Resident-On-Resident Violence Prevalent In Nursing Homes, Study Says

The fact that most nursing homes have occurrences of resident-on-resident violence may be no big surprise to you. But the implications of revealing such statistics in research could lead to improvements in best practices to prevent such violence.

**Cornell University-Weill Cornell Medical College** conducted a study of nursing home residents and released its results in November 2014. Nearly one in five nursing home residents in 10 facilities across New York State were involved in at least one aggressive encounter with a fellow resident during the month prior to the study, the researchers found.

This study is the first to directly observe and interview residents to determine the prevalence and predictors of elder mistreatment between residents in nursing homes, according to the Cornell Chronicle. The researchers studied more than 2,000 residents, gathering data via staff interviews and reports, direct observation, and a research-based questionnaire given to residents and staff.

Of the more than 2,000 residents studied, the researchers discovered that 19.8 percent experienced inappropriate, disruptive or hostile behavior. Verbal incidents, such as cursing, screaming or yelling at another person, occurred with 16 percent of residents. Unwelcome entry into another resident's room or going through another resident's possessions affected 10.5 percent of residents.

Approximately 5.7 percent of residents experienced physical incidents, such as hitting, kicking or biting. And 1.3 percent

experienced sexual incidents, such as exposing one's genitals, touching by other residents or attempting to gain sexual favors.

Researchers further found that the residents who typically act as the aggressors are those who are somewhat cognitively disabled but physically capable of moving around the facility. Overall, the research suggested that residents who are most likely to be involved in a mistreatment incident are younger, less cognitively and physically impaired, and more prone to disruptive behavior than fellow residents.

"We urgently need strategies to address this under-recognized problem, which affects fully one-fifth of all residents, erodes their quality of life and is stressful for staff to manage," **Mark S. Lachs, MD**, professor of clinical medicine at **Weill Cornell College**, told the Cornell Chronicle.

For more on this study, visit [weill.cornell.edu/news/pr/2014/11/study-highlights-prevalence-of-mistreatment-between-nursing-home-residents-pillemer-lachs.html](http://weill.cornell.edu/news/pr/2014/11/study-highlights-prevalence-of-mistreatment-between-nursing-home-residents-pillemer-lachs.html).