

PsychAGE News

Information and commentary about older adult and carer wellbeing

Issue 8, 6th December 2018, [SA Don't Go That Way! Resicams: You Do The Math](#)

The debate about whether or not to install CCTV cameras in residents' bedrooms seems like a sinister game of chess. In trying to save your rook you knowingly entrap yourself into checkmate. Hoping to reduce the risk of, say, 5% of abuse cases is likely to mean that we lose 100% of our privacy. It just doesn't add up.

Consider this LinkedIn post by Alison Rahn, Adjunct Research Fellow at the University of New England, on the 25th of November 2018:

"There's currently a Bill before the South Australian Parliament that would see surveillance cameras mandated in aged care residents' bedrooms, despite existing research that indicates that a large proportion of residents themselves are not in favour of CCTV. In its current form, the Bill makes no mention of who will own the footage or how it will be safe-guarded. This week, I asked Professor Rosalind Croucher, lawyer and President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, what legal protections there are in cases where images of residents are recorded and shared online without their consent. She said, "you've highlighted a gap in the legislation...currently there are none". For details of the Bill, see <https://lnkd.in/gDMu3HQ>."

The research Alison refers to relates to a slide that Colin McDonnell, practice lead of Scalabrini Village, shared at the recent Australian Association of Gerontology conference that I also attended. It stated that, "Only 47% of residents supported the idea of CCTV cameras in aged-care facilities, compared with 87% of relatives."

Ian Yates, CEO of Council of The Ageing, is equally concerned. In September this year he told Australian Ageing Agenda, "The use of hidden cameras... involves complex privacy and other legal issues ... We're not saying that they never should be used but we're very hesitant about their widespread use."

How can we be sure that adult children have in mind their parents best interests if that parent no longer has capacity to consent themselves? How can we be sure that footage will be used ethically? If cameras are to be installed in every room and there is an opt in clause, how can you be sure that the camera is not on? Would you like to be in your most private of quarters right now wondering—am I being filmed? What about people with existing mental health issues related to paranoia? What about good quality staff who are tired of having their every move scrutinized? What about the financial resources needed to implement this?

I reckon residents would rather the funds go to getting them to the toilet in time. SA, don't go that way!

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