Summary: There is a growing recognition that the occurrence of agitation/aggression and other behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia may result from unmet needs, such as unrelieved pain. To date, there have been no randomised placebo controlled trials of analgesic medications shown to modify pain and thereby reduce BPSD.

A 6-week randomised controlled trial of analgesic medications in 90 residents identified with both pain and BPSD will be undertaken. Residents will be randomised to receive either placebo, paracetamol, or paracetamol + codeine and followed during a two week baseline, a two week intervention phase and a two week post-treatment assessment.

The project will provide a systematic examination of pain and BPSD, and undertake the first ever randomised placebo controlled trial of analgesic interventions to specifically monitor changes in pain and consequent changes in the frequency of BPSD in persons with dementia. By completion, we will have important new insights into whether increased pain seen during movement exacerbates BPSD and robust evidence on the efficacy of analgesics as a treatment approach for pain-related agitation and other BPSD.

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Collaborating partners
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