Providing Aged-Care Through a TV Screen

(Care Protect CCTV hub in Belfast, Ireland)
Introduction

Shelter SA’s vision is for every South Australian to have an affordable, safe, secure and appropriate place to call home. Shelter SA has a particular focus on systems and policies that affect people living with housing need, living on low incomes and who are vulnerable members of society. Residential aged care facilities (RACFs) are a form of housing for vulnerable older people that should be home-like and safe where people are treated with care, respect and dignity. Shelter SA is deeply concerned about the ongoing resident abuse that has been occurring for many years in RACFs and we welcome the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

The recent announcement about a trial of closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance in RACFs in SA caused an understandable outpouring of support. People with loved ones in RACFs have seen how cameras installed in bedrooms have caught and exposed perpetrators committing acts of abuse. However, the filming only took place after suspicions of abuse were raised, not before the abuse took place. Public debate has been superficial in focusing on the most obvious of concerns, the privacy of residents. This report contains a review of the evidence behind the use of CCTV surveillance and takes a closer look at the risks and benefits associated with it to conclude that there is no evidence that it will prevent the abuse of vulnerable residents and we urge caution in its implementation and a very careful evaluation. While we await the results of the Royal Commission and associated recommendations, the aim of this report is to provide materials for a deeper public debate on the efficacy and cost of the CCTV trial in SA, what is needed to improve the model of care for vulnerable people and take a best practice approach to the prevention of abuse.

Key Findings

- The trial of CCTV surveillance in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) will commence in South Australia later this year. It is largely a response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and the much-publicised incidences of elder abuse in the media.

- The trial will involve using CCTV surveillance coupled with real-time monitoring and responding to incidences of abuse or potential abuse, which is a costly and resource intensive exercise that has very little evidence to support its efficacy.

- There is evidence that the use of CCTV surveillance in various settings, including RACFs, can have a detrimental effect on workforce and undermine the culture of care that is necessary for best practice in RACFs.

- The prevalence of elder abuse and neglect in RACFs arises from a complex range of systemic problems in the aged care sector, particularly a lack of workforce supply and a lack of adequately skilled and trained workforce.

- Resources and funding would be better allocated to addressing those systemic problems rather than implementing band-aid solutions like CCTV surveillance that will do very little to resolve those problems.
Background

The use of CCTV surveillance in various settings raises issues and concerns about privacy and civil liberties and there has been much public discussion and debate about this. However, an issue that has not attracted as much public attention or debate is how effective CCTV surveillance really is in reducing crime and antisocial behaviour, and the risks associated with its use. Such an oversight is perhaps due to an intuitive belief about how constant video surveillance of our movements will necessarily deter potential offenders, which then translates into the assumed efficacy of such a measure. What many people may be unaware of is that measuring the effectiveness of CCTV surveillance in preventing crime and antisocial behaviour is a highly complex and difficult task, and one that has yielded mixed results and equivocal conclusions.1 2 3 4 5 6

Despite uncertainty about effectiveness and risks, the Federal Government have decided to invest $500,000 into a trial of CCTV surveillance in several RACFs in South Australia. The trial is partly a response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and the much publicised incidences of elder abuse that have been exposed by covert filming.7 8 9 10 The trial will be conducted by SA Health in partnership with a company from the United Kingdom called Care Protect who specialise in the use of camera and audio technology (combined with independent monitoring) in health and social care settings. Care Protect will use their technology to monitor common areas for a period of time each day, while also monitoring residents’ rooms when a trigger system is activated by noise, movement and light changes, which then alerts a reviewer who can view the footage within seconds and initiate a response.11 12

It is important for the public to have a good understanding of the differences between the use of CCTV surveillance as a tool to prevent violent or abusive behaviour, the use of CCTV footage as a forensic tool for criminal investigation and criminal justice, and the use of CCTV surveillance for incident monitoring, quality management and training purposes. These differences can easily be forgotten, obscured or conflated in the discussion and debate about the effectiveness of CCTV surveillance in RACFs. It is also important for the public to understand the potential risks associated with using CCTV surveillance in

1 Armitage, R. (2002) To CCTV or Not to CCTV: A review of current research into the effectiveness of CCTV systems in reducing crime, Nacro Crime and Social Policy Section,
12 http://www.care-protect.co.uk/about/ (last accessed 16/05/2019)
RACFs. One of those risks is that CCTV monitoring can undermine the culture of care that is necessary to promote quality of life and well-being for people living in RACFs. In recent decades aged care researchers have been advocating for fundamental changes in the way service providers offer care for older people, particularly people with dementia. The changes represent a shift away from medical and institutional models of aged care to a model now commonly referred to as “person-centred care” (PCC). PCC is an evidence-based model of care that recognises the dignity and humanity of older people and gives primacy to their psychosocial needs.\(^\text{13}\)\(^\text{14}\) Creating an appropriate living environment in RACFs and promoting positive interactions and relationships between care staff and residents is essential to PCC.\(^\text{15}\)\(^\text{16}\)\(^\text{17}\) In recent years, policy makers in Australia have made a concerted effort to transform the way that aged-care is delivered so as to be more evidence-based and person-centred.\(^\text{18}\)\(^\text{19}\)\(^\text{20}\)

While the incidences of elder abuse and neglect in RACFs have motivated the government to take steps towards addressing this very serious problem, the idea that CCTV surveillance might prevent elder abuse and neglect in RACFs is not an evidence-based approach nor is it consistent with PCC. It is a knee-jerk reaction and an experimental approach towards aged care policy that heralds a return to the old institutional model of aged care repudiated by aged care researchers and advocates.

**Does CCTV Surveillance Prevent Violent Behaviour?**

A systematic review published this year on the effectiveness of CCTV for crime prevention in public and residential areas, provides evidence that CCTV is associated with a significant though modest reduction in vehicle crime, other property crime and drug crime. However, the authors of the review state that there were “no significant effects observed for violent crime or disorder”, which is consistent with findings from previous studies and reviews. The authors suggest that resources could be better allocated to measures other than CCTV surveillance in order to combat violent crime. Alternatively, they hypothesise that actively monitored CCTV surveillance in which incidents can be detected in real-time, paired with police


\(^{17}\) Ryan, T., Nolan, M., Reid, D., and Enderby, P. (2008) Using the Senses Framework to achieve relationship-centred dementia care services, *Dementia,* Vol. 7(1); Pp: 71-93


officers on patrol and standing by to be deployed when required, might help to reduce violent crime.\textsuperscript{21,22} This hypothesis will be put to the test in the trial of CCTV surveillance in South Australia.

In the context of prisons, the use of CCTV has a number of different purposes including identification of offenders, coordinating responses to incidences, gathering evidence, improving safety, and detecting or preventing certain specific behaviours amongst prisoners (such as the smuggling of contraband, self-harm, suicide and escape).\textsuperscript{23} While there is some evidence that CCTV can prevent violent prisoner behaviour, in a much cited study by Allard et al (2008) it was found that CCTV surveillance has a greater effect on non-violent prisoner behaviour than violent prisoner behaviour, and where it has an effect on violent prisoner behaviour it was greater for planned violence compared with unplanned or spontaneous violence. The authors argued that “the inability of CCTV to affect violent behaviour is due to the spontaneous nature of much violence”.\textsuperscript{24} Such findings raise questions about the nature of elder abuse in RACFs, whether it is planned or spontaneous, whether it reflects a criminal or malevolent propensity on the part of abusers, and the extent to which systemic problems in the aged-care sector contribute to such violence.

CCTV does not constitute a physical barrier against elder abuse. It is a psychological barrier that has a coercive effect on individuals by affecting their attitudes and motivations. Such coercive measures create interesting and complex power relations between surveillance authorities and individuals under surveillance.\textsuperscript{25} In this regard, CCTV surveillance has the potential to significantly shape a person’s attitude and motivations towards their role in the workplace and this might lead to various negative outcomes. Research indicates that employees often respond to these kinds of coercive measures by engaging in resistance strategies that include finding ways to avoid surveillance or ways to hiding the truth, and this can undermine their sense of duty or responsibility to their task.

A recent study by Anteby and Chan (2018) investigated the effect of CCTV surveillance on transport security officer (TSO) employees working in baggage check rooms and other baggage checkpoints at a large urban airport in the United States.\textsuperscript{26} The reason for the use of CCTV surveillance was to address recurring accusations of theft of traveller’s belongings. In this study the researchers interviewed a total of 89 employees (55 TSOs and 34 other airport screening employees). Many reported that they felt overly scrutinised, spied upon and always visible to someone. However, paradoxically, they also reported that they felt unnoticed and uncared for, with some reporting that they felt devalued as individuals or persons. Overall, the employees interpreted the use of CCTV surveillance as a punitive measure that places them under risk of disciplinary action and jeopardises their prospects of continued employment or promotion. Their response was to find ways of avoiding surveillance by seeking out means of becoming invisible, for

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example, by keeping a low profile and being as inconspicuous as possible. What was particularly interesting were the numerous reports of TSO’s becoming more reserved and emotionally disconnected when interacting with travellers and viewing them as non-persons.

This is ironic because TSOs had felt like they were not cared for and essentially were mostly treated as objects by management, and in this practice, TSOs imposed on travellers a similar dehumanization to more easily portray the emotional absence they felt they needed to remain unnoticed. (Anteby and Chan, 2018; pg. 257)

The researchers argue that if surveillance is interpreted as coercive it causes employees to engage in resistance strategies or “invisibility practices”. Management interprets this as justification for further surveillance efforts which employees interpret as further coercion thus motivating further resistance and invisibility practices. The authors describe this response as a “self-fulfilling cycle of coercive surveillance”.27

In a recent study by Berridge et al (2019), 273 staff from aged care and assisted living service providers were interviewed to gain an understanding of their concerns about CCTV surveillance. Many of those staff thought CCTV surveillance had the potential to “demoralize, offend, stress, add undue pressure, intimidate, and show lack of confidence in staff” with some claiming that it undermines the potential for a “home-like” experience, likening it to a process of institutionalisation.28 These concerns highlight the fact that quality aged care is fundamentally based on the kind of relationship that exists between staff (particularly care support workers) and residents, which is a central tenet of PCC.

So while there is very little evidence to support the view that CCTV surveillance will be effective in preventing elder abuse, there is substantive evidence that CCTV surveillance can have a detrimental effect on the relationship between care staff and residents, and undermine the culture of care that aged care providers, researchers and advocates have been trying to promote for many years now. This is something that family members with loved ones living in RACFs, the general public, and elected representatives must bear in mind and weigh up against any perceived or potential benefits of CCTV surveillance in RACFs.

A Culture of Care versus a Culture of Coercion

In recent years, aged care providers have transformed their model of care service so that it is more consistent with “person-centred care” (PCC). PCC is essentially based on the idea that older people, especially people with dementia, are persons and it is in virtue of their being persons (or their personhood) that they deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. Tom Kitwood, who pioneered and coined the phrase “person-centred care”, referred to personhood as “a standing or status that is bestowed upon one human being, by others, in the context of relationship and social being” and goes on to say “it implies recognition, respect and trust”.29 He also emphasised that dementia is not just a biological/neurological condition affecting the brain, but is also a psychological and social condition affecting the mental health of a person with dementia and their relationships with other people. One of the most widely cited

27 Ibid. pg. 258
frameworks for understanding PCC is Dawn Brooker’s “VIPS” framework. VIPS is an acronym that describes how people with dementia and their carers must be “valued”, treated as “individuals”, how their “perspectives” must be considered, and how their “social environment” plays a key role in all of this. Positive social interactions, authentic communication and genuine relationships between carer and residents are the keys to providing PCC.

Coercive measures like CCTV surveillance can undermine the capacity for a carer to act out of compassion, empathy, and sympathy. Instead of encouraging a carer to act from a sense of moral duty or sense of doing one’s job to the best of one’s ability, CCTV surveillance might encourage them to act out self-interest or fear of incrimination and to become less conspicuous while being more task orientated. Hence CCTV surveillance has the potential to shift the focus away from the relationship between carer and resident, instead placing it onto the relationship between carer and camera, which could significantly undermine the capacity of carers to provide PCC. This problem is exacerbated by the effect that CCTV surveillance can have on residents and on the physical or built-environment of an RACF, which is supposed to resemble a home-like environment rather than an institution. In this regard, the use of CCTV surveillance in RACFs marks a return to the much maligned and repudiated institutional model of aged care from previous decades.

The flipside to all of this is that CCTV surveillance could expose the extent to which aged care facilities are under-staffed and under-resourced, shedding light on the systemic problems in aged care that constitute the root causes of elder abuse and neglect in RACFs. Of course, aged care researchers, advocates and service providers have known about these issues for many years and have consistently called on governments to address them. The Federal Government made a concerted effort to do this almost a decade ago by initiating major reforms to the aged care sector and introducing relevant legislation. Since then a number of reviews have been conducted, all of which highlight the continuing need to address persistent systemic problems associated with workforce training, workforce supply, quality of care and institutional governance. Resources should be directed towards the aged care workforce to encourage more healthcare professionals to enter into aged care work, to provide them with adequate training and professional recognition, and to assist the aged care sector to remain financially viable.

There are also broader issues relating to the undervaluing of aged care workforce and the way that older people are devalued and marginalised in society that also need to be addressed.\(^{40}\)

### Conclusion

It is important for the public to understand that the trial of CCTV surveillance in RACFs, as a way of addressing elder abuse, constitutes an experimental approach towards aged-care policy rather than an evidence-based approach. It is also important that people understand the significant risks associated with the use of CCTV surveillance and weigh them against any perceived or potential benefits. Those risks go beyond matters of privacy, rights or consent and go to the heart of the challenges of providing quality aged care for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. There has been virtually no public discussion or consideration of the real possibility that CCTV surveillance in RACFs could negatively affect the relationships between carers and residents, undermine the culture of care necessary to promote quality of life and well-being of older people living in RACF, use up much needed resources and funding for aged care while potentially contributing further to the systemic problems that led to elder abuse and neglect in the first place.