

# Dementia Friendly GP Surgeries

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## Background

Dementia is a common condition that affects about 800,000 people in the UK (Alzheimer's Society, 2007). The risk of developing dementia increases with age. It is predicted that one in three people over 65 will develop dementia. West Hampshire has a higher than UK average life expectancy. As people live longer the number of people with dementia is increasing. It is estimated that by 2021, the number of people with dementia in the UK will have increased to around 1 million (Alzheimer's Society, 2014). A GP surgery is well placed to initially support patients with dementia (NHS England, 2014). Many of the predicted population with dementia may already be known to their GP but not have a formal diagnosis. One of the first places someone worried about their memory might go is to their GP.

## Project

The author's fellowship presented the opportunity to work with West Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group (WHCCG) on a project to explore the impact of implementing 'dementia friendly practices'.

## Aims

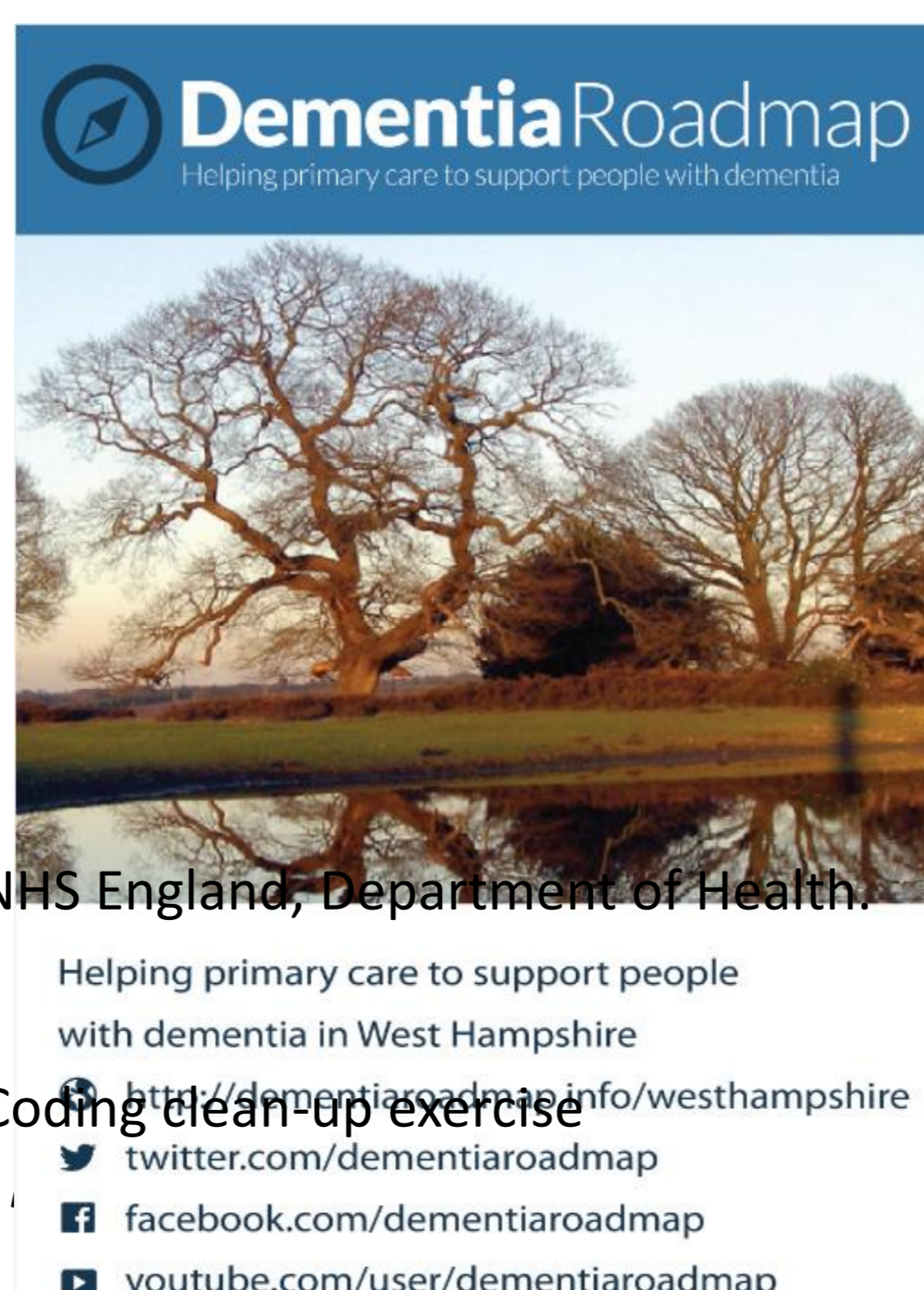
- Promote a culture of support for people with dementia and their carers.
- Increase the identification of patients with dementia so that they can access support.
- Identify resources and learning to share with other practices.

## Method

Three practices were supported to implement elements of the primary care iSPACE model developed by Dr Nicola Decker and supported by Wessex Academic Health Science Network from elements of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) commitment to the care of people with dementia in general hospitals. Other resources accessed online were available to the practices such as a coding clean-up exercise (Russell, 2013), The King's Fund Enhancing Healing Environment tool and Hampshire County Council Dementia Friendly Toolkit.

A 'cultural web' tool was developed to record existing practice, this was repeated during and after the project. Resources were developed to share with other practices looking to become 'dementia friendly'.

Alzheimer's society 2007  
Alzheimer's society 2014  
Dementia Revealed; What Primary Care Needs to Know. NHS England, Department of Health, 2014  
AHSN ispace  
Dr P. Russell, NHS London (now UCL partners) Dementia Coding clean-up exercise  
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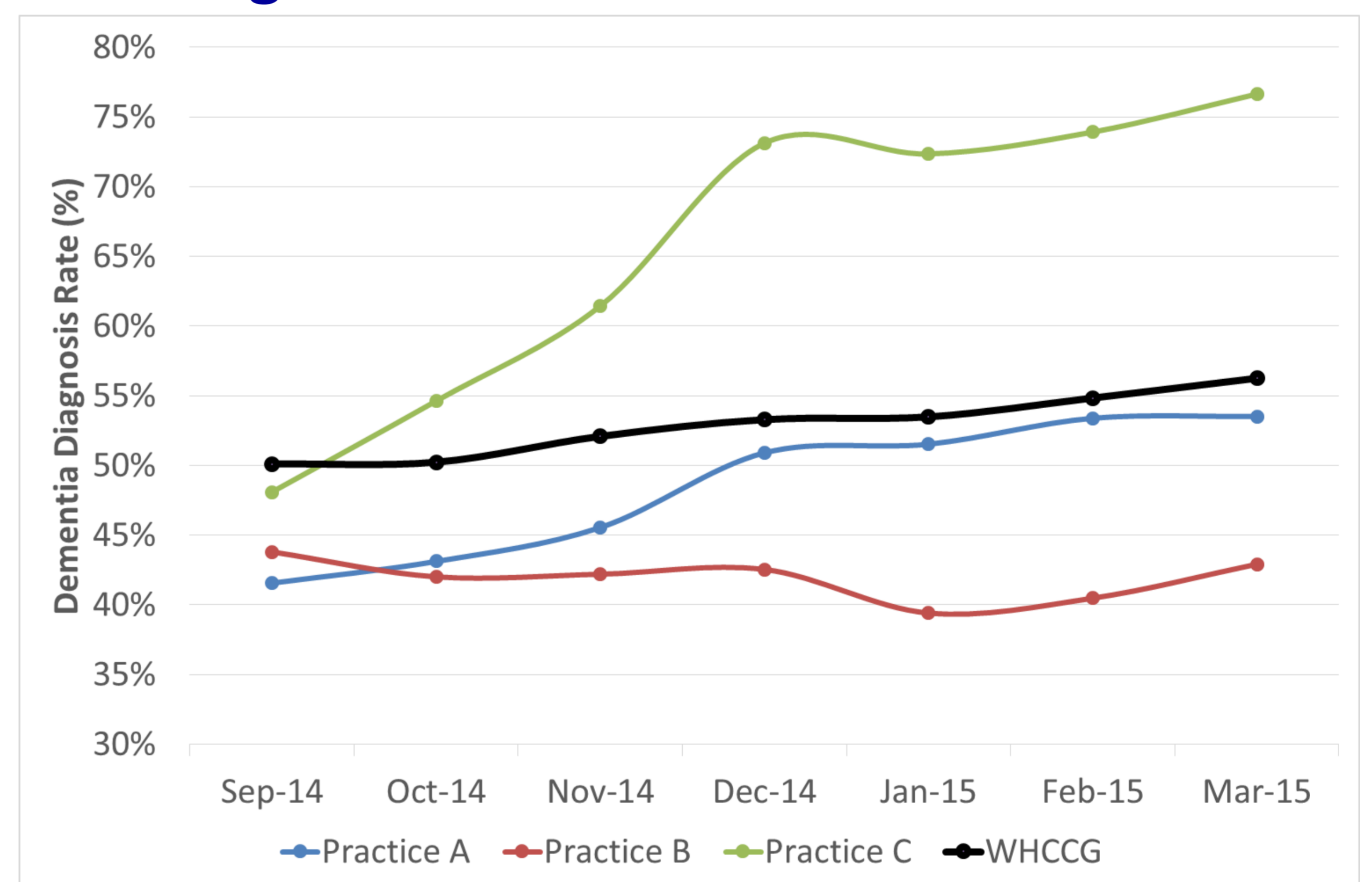
## Results: Culture

A variety of changes were introduced at each surgery to improve the culture of care for patients with dementia. Key to these improvements were:

- **GP champion within the practice**  
Crucial to support and motivate the team through the process
- **Multi-disciplinary education**  
Whole team learning such as Alzheimer's Society 'Dementia Friends'
- **Links with Older Persons Mental Health Team**  
Meetings to develop or strengthen links with secondary care
- **Dementia Advisor**  
Linking with local DA highlighted the help they can offer GPs in supporting patients with dementia and their carers.

In addition tools were developed by each practice to improve dementia care plan reviews. The actions pledged for the Dementia Action Alliance and other resources developed were collated into the West Hampshire Dementia Roadmap for sharing with other practices.

## Results: Diagnosis



The dementia diagnosis rate varied for the three practices. The practice with a +25% increase had a very successful coding audit result and also had multiple nursing homes on their list. The practice with -3% rates had only one nursing home and many winter deaths. This information supported WHCCG in discussions with NHS England about the target rates on a practice level.

## Outcomes

The resources developed such as care plans and practice action plans have been placed on the newly developed West Hampshire Dementia Roadmap. Two more practices in WHCCG have since become dementia friendly and others are looking at dementia friendly actions. An educational package is being developed for GPs. The work will be shared more widely across Hampshire with the AHSN and nationally with Alzheimer's Society.