

ABSTRACT

Australia's population is ageing rapidly and additional community health provisions are likely to be required. To enhance equity and access to health for the population with a non-English speaking background ethnic-specific programs, such as Dutch-specific community services for the aged, have been introduced. Brisbane's Dutch community is becoming increasingly involved with the care of the 'Dutch' elderly, but is largely unaware of the needs in relation to further planning of Dutch-specific aged care provisions.

This study is primarily concerned with exploring and describing the overall situation of the 'Dutch' elderly in Brisbane and their health-related needs. The extent of their integration into Australian society is considered, with reference to language adequacy and cultural preferences. Physical, emotional and socio-economic aspects, impacting upon health, and awareness and uptake of currently available aged care provisions are also addressed.

This exploratory study provides a better understanding of the situation and perception of the elderly with a Netherlands background in Brisbane (ABS region 305). A survey by questionnaire was undertaken to elicit quantitative data from 205 research participants.

The research findings suggest that 94% of Brisbane's 'Dutch' elderly are proficient in the use of the English language, while 6% has limited knowledge of English. Despite being bilingual to various degrees, a considerable proportion prefer to speak Dutch and the majority are rather strongly Dutch oriented in relation to cultural preferences. The need for social interaction with people of similar interest and background was identified, as well as a lack of information about available community services. The research findings support the need to develop Dutch-specific provisions for the elderly in Brisbane, mainly because of cultural requirements. Thirty percent of the participants like to become involved with a Dutch-specific visiting program and 37% would be prepared to contribute towards the cost of Dutch oriented community provisions if needed to remain in their own surroundings.