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## Evaluating The National Continence Management Strategy: Towards Better Health And Well-Being.

### Abstract

It is estimated that over two million Australians, including about a third of adult women, have some degree of incontinence, with the prevalence of incontinence increasing with age. The National Continence Management Strategy (NCMS), aimed at prevention and treatment of this significant problem, has now been in place over four years. The project phase (\$15 million) is closing, and funding continues at about \$2 million per annum through the Department of Health and Ageing.

Over 68 national research and service development projects were funded during the first phase, including a detailed analysis of continence in the community; local community development/education projects; randomised controlled trials; and specifically targeted studies to improve the quality of continence services and explore models of service. A number of NCMS projects have also been specifically undertaken to increase the community awareness and understanding of continence and the treatment services available.

This paper explores the independent evaluation of the project outcomes with a view to recommendations in relation to better continence policy and planning and the development of improved continence care in Australia. Specific challenges for evaluation methods have been set with the broad, rather than focused, series of studies and interventions that make up this first phase of the NCMS. The paper discusses the initial findings of the evaluation, including modelling various key elements of the strategy. The evaluation will feed into the continuing phase of the NCMS, summarising and evaluating the effectiveness of what has been achieved and identifying appropriate strategies for implementation.

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