A letter to the ED nurses from an Aged Care nurse.

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Here is an open letter to emergency department nurses written by an aged care nurse:

Dear ED nurses.
Firstly a shout out to all the nurses in EDs across Australia. I have worked in ED and I know the high-level skills needed to work in fast paced, complex and often emotionally charged situations.

Hats off to you all.

HOWEVER, we need to talk about the elderly nursing home residents in EDs because frankly it just not working.
Elderly people who come into ED are there for the same reason as everyone else.

To be assessed and treated for an acute episode.
Agree? Yes? Great!

Aged and frail people have an additional care overlay though. If the mechanism of injury is traumatic (i.e. a fall) or infectious the aged are likely to develop delirium especially with a background of dementia.

This makes these people quite hard to manage in a busy ED… but here is the kicker THEY ARE STILL ENTITLED TO CARE.

We are all nurses. Basic nursing care is the foundation of what we do regardless of specialty.

So, all you fabulous ED nurses out there. With the greatest of respect please, I beg of you, remember to treat their pain (even if they can’t express it – especially then), remember basic hygiene – continence aids, mouth care, skin care etc., feed them for heaven’s sake, and please please please don’t send them back in the small hours of the night – most nursing homes have no access to medicos outside of business hours and no one wants to think of their elderly family member having to suffer through severe pain until the gp comes in to write up something stronger then paracetamol and the pharmacy is able to deliver it.

Thank you again for your hard work.
Sincerely,

_A dedicated aged care RN_

Ian Miller