



## The Development and Evaluation of Silver Chain's Independence Programs

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During the last ten years Silver Chain, has developed and implemented two restorative home care programs. The first of these, the Home Independence Program (HIP), is an early intervention program directed at optimising functioning, preventing or delaying further functional decline, promoting healthy ageing and encouraging the self-management of chronic diseases. It targets older individuals when they are first referred for home care services or at a point when their needs have increased and additional services are being requested. Having been first implemented in 2001 in a restricted operational trial, the service was then made available across the organisation in 2003.

The second program, the Personal Enablement Program (PEP), was developed in 2002 to provide a rapid response to meet the needs of home care eligible clients who were exiting an acute episode of care in metropolitan hospitals. Based on HIP, PEP is also designed to remove or minimise an individual's need for ongoing home support services by maximising their independence. This program commenced as a metropolitan-wide service in March 2003.

The evaluation of these restorative programs has primarily focused on an examination of the HIP model which has included a pilot study, an operational trial, a non-randomised controlled trial and currently a randomised controlled trial. The operations and short and longer term individual and service outcomes of both programs have also been examined on a regular basis. Most recently, when considering program targeting, multivariate analysis has been used to identify client characteristics most commonly associated with program "success" ie. not requiring ongoing services.

The results of the HIP trials have consistently found that after participating in HIP more than 70% of clients do not require ongoing home care, and that after twelve months this is still the case for 60%. The corresponding figures for the control clients who received "usual" home care were just over 30% and under 20%. Corresponding improvement in clients' ability to function independently was also found.

More than 12,500 older people have now participated in HIP and PEP. When their service records were examined at yearly intervals for up to 5 years after completing the program (depending on when they had participated in the program) very few clients who were not receiving a Silver Chain home support service one year after discharge from the independence program, were found to be using one in subsequent years. Multivariate analysis found that the likelihood of program "success" (not requiring ongoing care at program end) was five times greater for HIP and four times greater for PEP clients who were not receiving any home care when referred. Living alone and not having a carer also significantly increased the likelihood of returning to independence, but to a much smaller extent.

Current plans for further research include completion of both the non-randomised and randomised controlled trials which will, when the data are made available, involve comparison of the use, and cost, of other health and aged care services by the study groups.

### References

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