

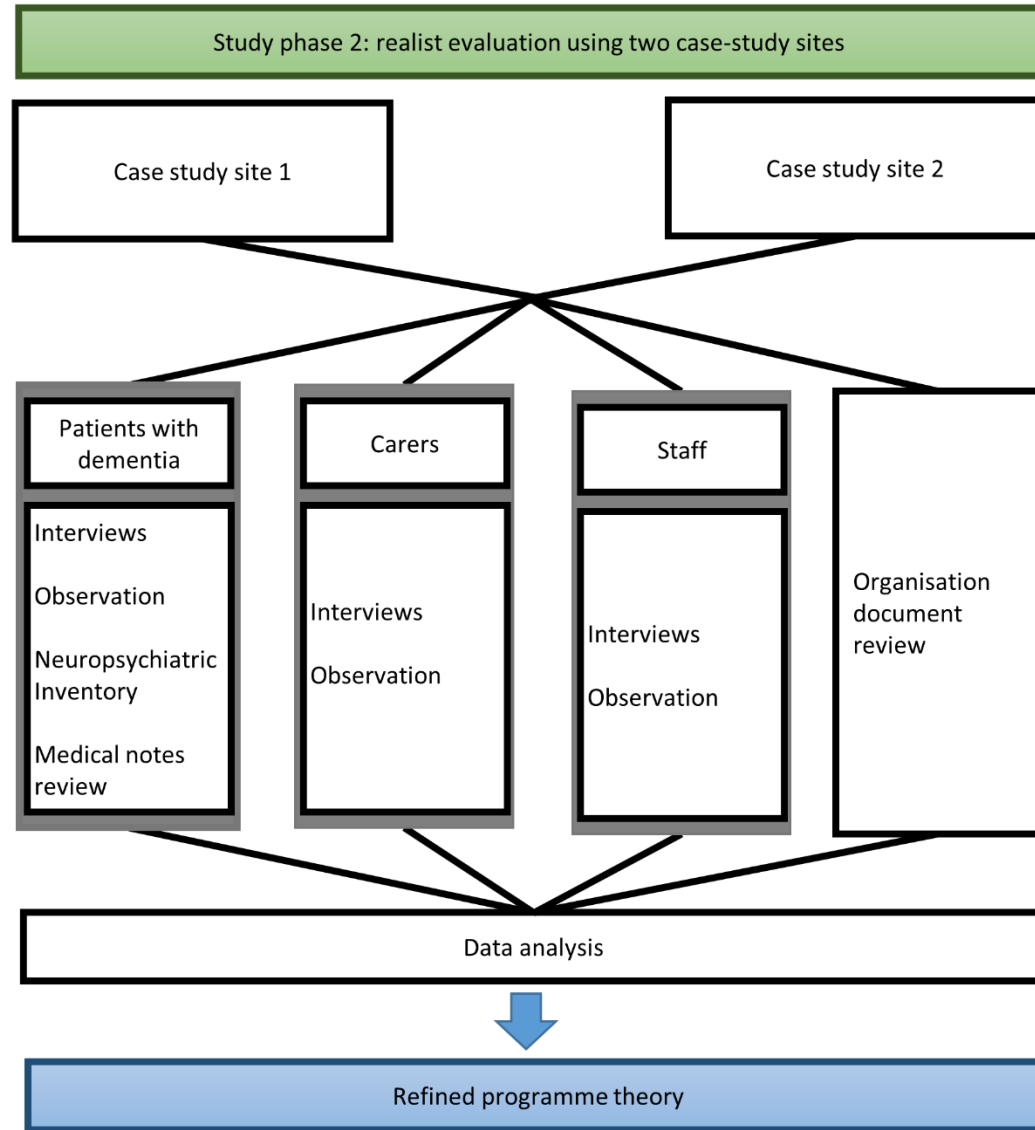
# Overcoming research challenges during a realist evaluation of dementia-friendly environments in hospitals

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# Overview

- ▶ Data collection
- ▶ Judgements of patients' capacity to consent
- ▶ Use of on-going consent
- ▶ Involvement of relatives
- ▶ Using realist methodology

# Study design



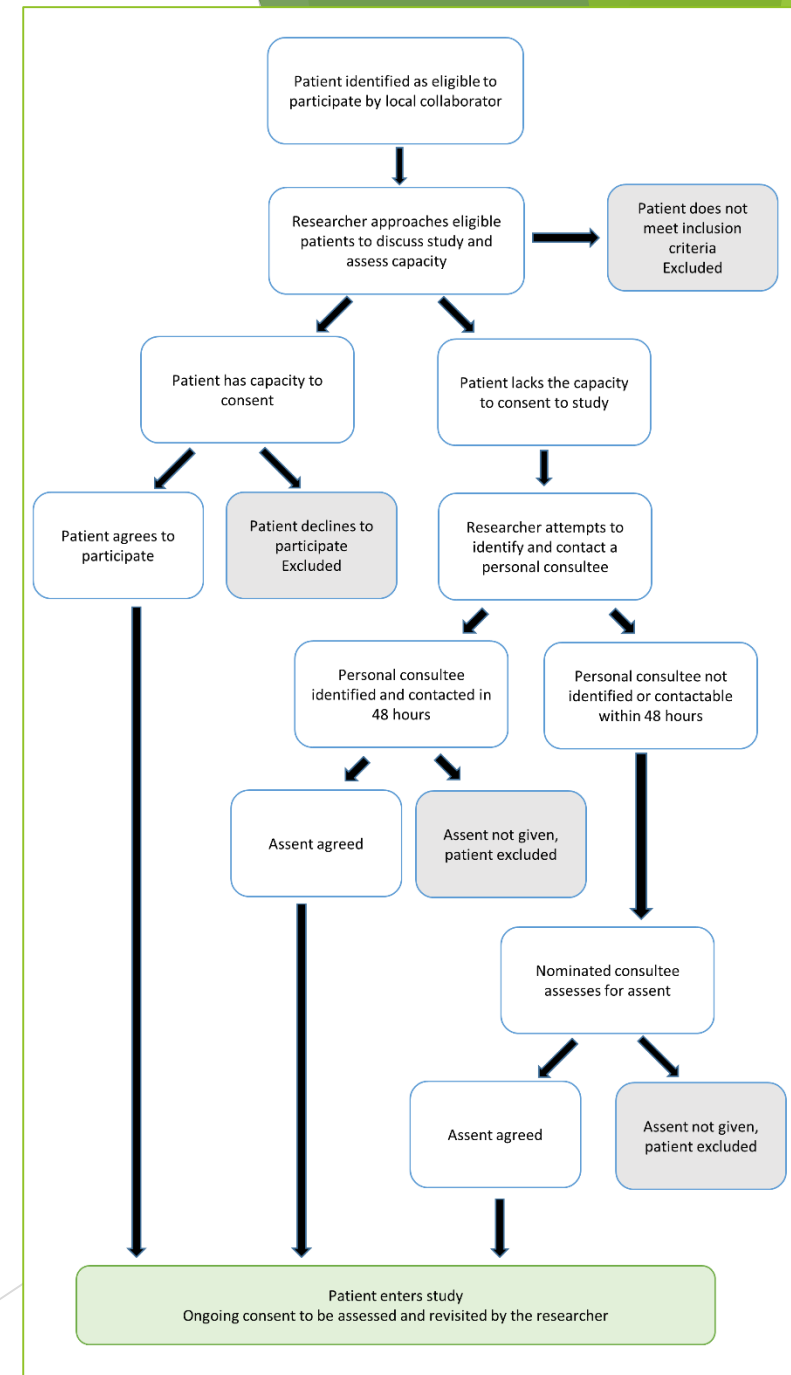
# Issues around data collection

- ▶ Informing participants of research
  - ▶ Staff meetings
  - ▶ Information leaflets
  - ▶ Posters
  - ▶ Discussions
- ▶ Opting-out process for observations
  - ▶ No personal information collected
  - ▶ Awareness of changing moods



# Judgements of patients capacity to consent

- ▶ Process for recruitment
- ▶ Complications of patient's acute conditions and fluctuating cognitive abilities on capacity
- ▶ Discussions with staff, and my own observations, and conversations with patients to address individual dilemmas



# Use of on-going consent

- ▶ Interviews with acutely ill, disorientated patients
  - ▶ Recognising and responding to patients needs
  - ▶ Time with patients following interviews
- ▶ Observations on the ward
  - ▶ Awareness of behaviours that might indicate withdrawing consent

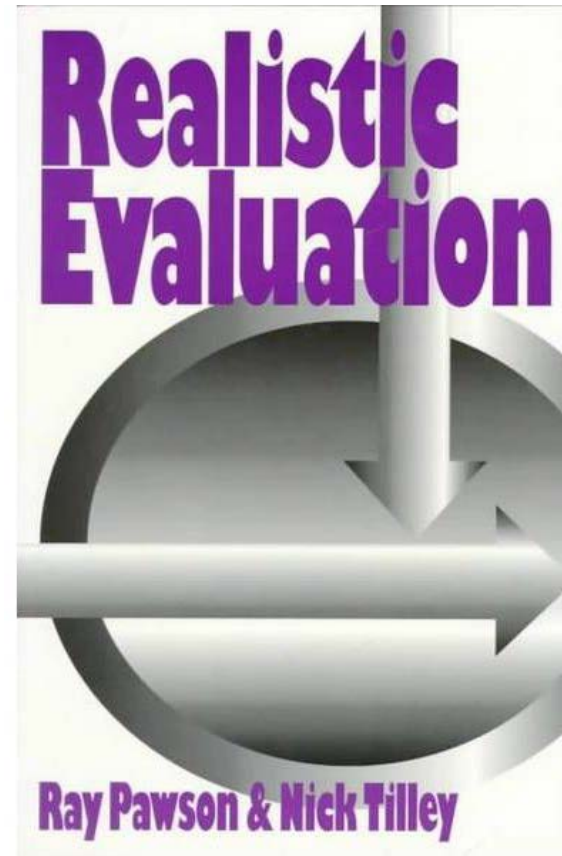


# Involvement of relatives

- ▶ Challenge in recruitment
  - ▶ Interested in the study but difficult to formally recruit
  - ▶ Burden of participating, more important concerns
- ▶ Concern about potential harm was raised by a patient's relative
  - ▶ Importance of the protocol and support from my supervisors
- ▶ Resolution of issue
  - ▶ Reassurance to relative
  - ▶ Highlighted training needs to management
  - ▶ Recruitment and data collection was not impeded.

# Testing theories of what works: using realist methodology

- ▶ Realist evaluation is a theory driven approach to research
- ▶ Attention to structuring interviews and observations to maximize opportunities to test the theory was challenging
- ▶ An iterative approach to data collection, incorporating new evidence, and re-working of candidate theories.





# Advice from my experience

- ▶ Preparation for data collection
  - ▶ Theory development
  - ▶ Longer than anticipated
  - ▶ Methods literature
- ▶ Peer support including Interdem Summer School, RAMESES JISCMail
- ▶ Take time to understand the method
- ▶ Hugely enjoyable

# References

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