



**Press Release**  
**From: The Relatives & Residents Association**  
**4 December 2007**

**The R&RA condemns the use of anti-psychotic drugs as the option of first resort for older people with dementia living in care homes.**

Anti-psychotic drugs, used inappropriately, cause harm to older people with dementia - emotionally, physically and psychologically. Last night's Panorama programme, *Please look after Dad*, revealed this graphically in highlighting the personal stories behind the use of the 'chemical cosh'.

Sadly, inadequate training of staff in caring for people with dementia, and the low status and low pay of care home workers mean that it is not surprising that some care homes succumb to the temptation to make residents with dementia easier to manage by plying them with too many drugs that can cause them serious harm. The Relatives & Residents Association condemns this practice outright.

But it is not enough simply to condemn care homes. The inappropriate prescribing of these drugs must be rooted out. They most likely reach residents because a qualified medical professional is prescribing them - and repeatedly. The law requires care homes to keep meticulous records on the use of drugs and these records are inspected by the official regulator, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). Individuals' medication regimes are required to be reviewed regularly.

The Relatives & Residents Association calls on CSCI to examine the use of anti-psychotic drugs in individual care homes and to compare patterns of prescribing and administration in order to help uncover potential misuse. CSCI is committed to stamping out bad practice, and it doesn't get much worse than this.

**Notes to editors**

1. The R&RA is the national charity that supports older people in care and their relatives, and campaigns for improved standards and better quality of life for all care home residents. The R&RA runs an Advice Line on 020 7359 8136.
2. *Please look after Dad* was broadcast on 3 December at 8.30pm on BBC1.
3. Advisor to the R&RA, Les Bright, can be contacted on 01392 424696, mobile 07712 386846.