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**ABSTRACT 182**

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a) **Initial findings of the lived experience for the person at home following admission of their spouse into an aged care facility.**

b) **Background:** Carers play a substantial role in terms of physical, social and economic needs for the current and future ageing population of Australia. This is an international phenomenon, as the spouse is the most common provider of care for vulnerable, older people (United Nations, 2005). Primary carers are also the least likely of all carers to seek help (Hales, 2007). Carers of spouses work very hard in providing care for their loved one at home and yet there is no evidence of what happens to that dedicated carer after their loved one is admitted into an aged care facility for permanent care.

c) **Objectives:** This study will inform carers, aged care staff and other key stakeholders of new knowledge gained from the perspective of the carer, designed to inform practices in all areas relevant to the person who has experienced the admission of their spouse into an aged care facility.

d) **Methods:** A hermeneutic phenomenological approach has been be utilised, underpinned by the work of phenomenologist Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). This involves in depth, recorded interviews, transcription and analysis to identify themes or “essences” of the participants’ lived experience. It is a longitudinal approach gaining insight of the participants’ transition experience as soon as possible after the admission of their spouse from home into an aged care facility, and repeated during the first 12 months post admission.

e) **Results.** Initial analysis of the interviews revealed feelings of doubt, confusion around the paperwork and financial systems involved and thoughts around separation following the admission of the persons spouse to an aged care facility. There were major differences in the perception of separation between participants.

f) **Conclusions.** Each individual in the study has experienced some changes because of their spouse’s admission; however, the impact of these changes varies greatly. At this point analysis is in its early stage so further analyses will continue before conclusions are made.