

Changing ‘the way we do things around here’: Improving organisational culture for staff and residents in residential aged care

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INTRODUCTION

Australia’s aged care sector faces challenges: an ageing population, residents with complex multi-morbidity, workforce retention, concerns about quality and safety, and the COVID-19 pandemic. In healthcare, positive organisational culture (effective leadership, good teamwork) are linked to less staff burnout, increased quality of care.

METHOD

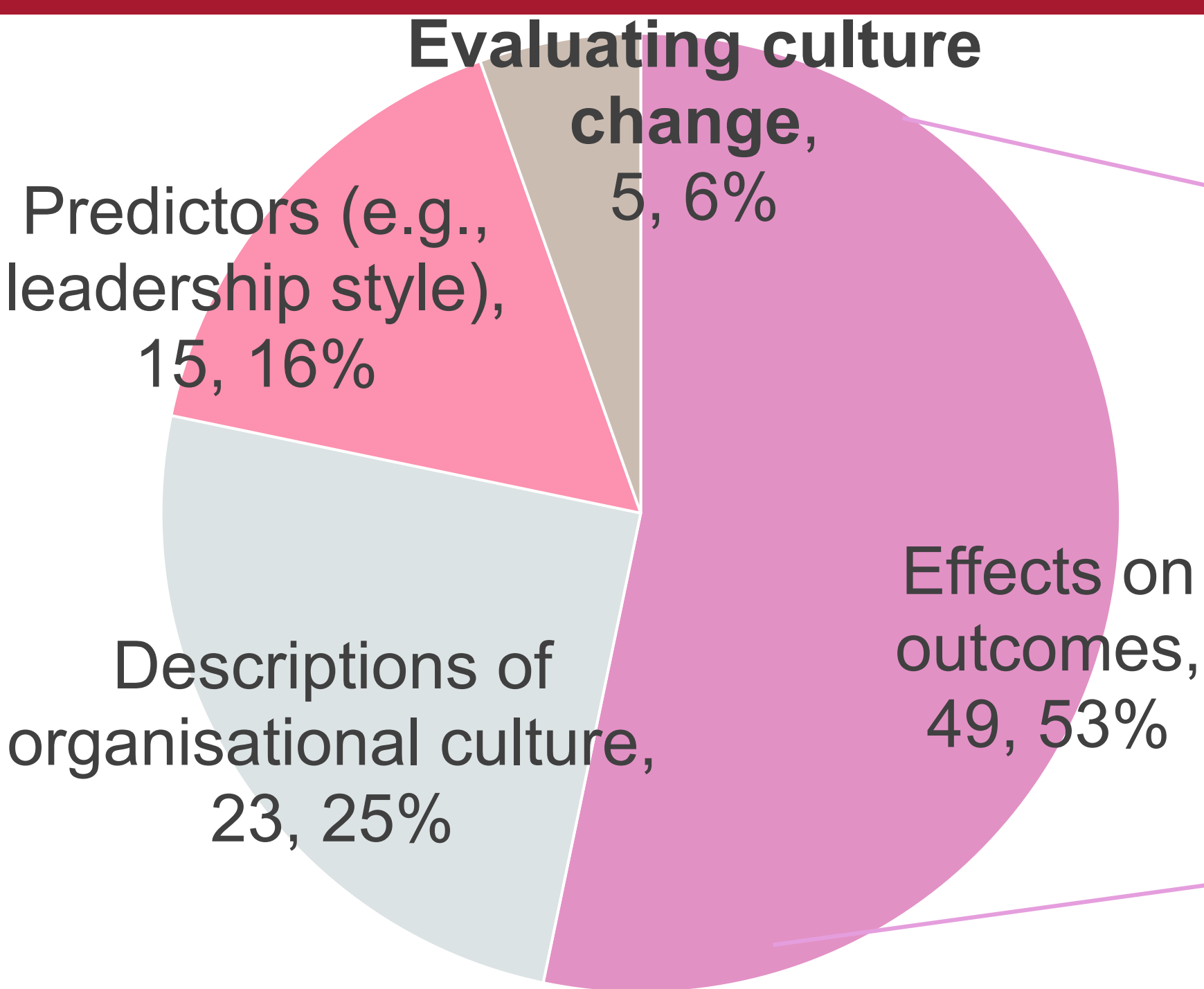
- An integrative review of studies on organisational culture in residential aged care.
- A document analysis of the final report of Australia’s Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.
- A mixed method study in Australian aged care homes focused on understanding the association between organisational culture, context, and quality and safety outcomes, and how we can improve culture.

AIMS

1. To deeply understand the association between organisational culture and workforce, safety and quality outcomes in Australian residential aged care via extensive, triangulated research studies.
2. To examine how organisational culture can be improved for the benefit of staff and residents.

RESULTS

92 studies
on
organisational culture in
residential aged care

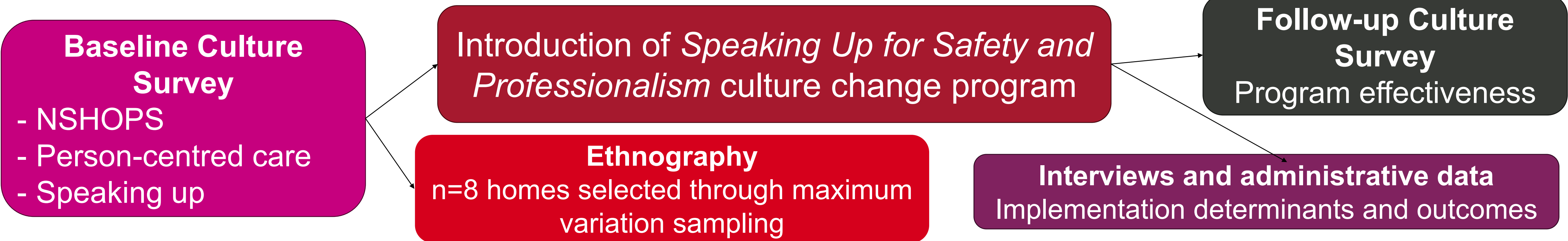


Outcomes studied	Studies
Care quality (e.g., person-centredness)	16
Care processes (e.g., use of psychotropic meds)	15
Staff outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction)	11
Clinical outcomes (e.g., adverse events)	9
Organisational issues (e.g., teamwork)	8

155 references to
“organisational culture”
in Australia’s *Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety*

Refs to culture	Example	N
Culture as problem	‘...poor workplace culture has also contributed to poor care’	42
Aspirations for culture	‘...culture of continuous improvement and striving for excellence’	28
Importance of culture	We [the Royal Commissioners] both understand the importance of leadership and culture to the delivery of high quality and safe aged care.’	33
Factors contributing to culture	‘...values and behaviour of people in these senior positions have a significant impact on workplace culture and the quality of care that is delivered.’	29
Need for culture change	‘In the new aged care system, the Department will need to be a proactive system leader ...This will necessarily involve cultural change.’	9

62 aged care
homes



CONCLUSION

Despite recognising the importance of organisational culture in aged care among policymakers and academics, the numerous gaps in understanding and improving culture persist. Few studies examine culture change in aged care and most do not examine implementation issues. Although policy documents highlight a need for organisational culture change, there is limited guidance on how this would be achieved. Our extensive, longitudinal research aims to address these limitations.

KEY REFERENCES

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