Sandra Higuet, MD

Atlantic Fellow at GBHI
Trinity College Dublin
Home Country: Belgium
Field of Employment: Geriatrics

sandra.higuet@gbhi.org
Professional Profile

Key Areas: memory impairment, dementia, delirium, neuropsychology, geriatric medicine, hospital management

Since the start of her training in geriatrics 10 years ago, Sandra Higuet has worked to improve care for demented patients. As a hospital physician, she has witnessed the stigma against older people and seen that this stigma is even greater when the patient is demented. Higuet believes the problem stems from fear of the unknown, and indeed, studies have shown that training has a positive impact on the care of demented patients. Higuet has tried to change the perception of dementia by providing training to the general public, paramedics, practitioners, and hospital colleagues. She also participated in a national information campaign, “Let’s Change the Vision of Alzheimer’s Disease.”

With the support of the Atlantic Fellows program at GBHI, Higuet would like to use the existing structure she employs in Belgium to create an integrated care facility for the management of patients with mild cognitive impairment or dementia. She plans to develop a large center of expertise with resources for both community care and acute care in the same location: acute geriatric beds, a geriatric day hospital with a memory clinic, information for caregivers, resources for home care, a specialized nursing home for patients with cognitive impairment, information for the public to reduce stigma, psychoeducation for families, and information about prevention. Through GBHI, she hopes to build an international network to increase visibility of and improve care for patients with dementia, and generate resources to help this fragile population and their caregivers.

"Let us change the vision of dementia and add life to years, not just years to life!"
Bio: Sandra Higuet is head of the Geriatric Department at the University Hospital of Charleroi (CHU), Belgium. She has clinical experience in geriatric acute care, in the memory clinic, and on the geriatric liaison team. She studied internal medicine and geriatric medicine at the Free University of Brussels in Belgium and completed her training for a diploma in psychiatry for the elderly in France. She also has a degree in hospital management. In 2012, she was selected to participate in the European Academy Medicine of Aging, and she is a member of the Belgian Society of Geriatrics and Gerontology and the Belgian College of Geriatrics.