

Optimizing the transition to the nursing home: qualitative study of the experiences and needs of family caregivers of persons living with dementia

Introduction

- The transition from home to a nursing home is a major event for the person with dementia and their family caregiver.
- A smooth transition facilitates the adjustment to the new situation and reduces stress and the burden for all involved.
- We examine the experiences and needs of family caregivers of persons with dementia during transition to a nursing home.

Methods

- Part of the first cycle of the action research project 'Warm Welcome'
- Qualitative interview study with family caregivers, 6 weeks after nursing home admission of their relative with dementia
- Inductive approach to thematic analysis

Results

9 female participants; mean age 61 years (range 48 to 77); 5 were the child of the resident, 3 the partner, 1 niece

Admission to the nursing home is often quick and emotionally overwhelming

'I felt like I was on a rollercoaster [...] That I had to decide, alone, to let him go there. Well, that was so difficult and emotional.' (R6, partner)

Collaboration between staff, family, and resident (family involvement, getting to know the resident)

'You no longer have a role in the day-to-day care of your mother, because you hand that over. They don't ask you 'what do you want to continue doing?'' (R2, daughter)

'I have to repeat the same information over and over again.' (R2, daughter)

Need for practical information (checklist, repetition of information)

'I know the healthcare system quite well. But despite the leaflets we had received, it was unclear to me for a long time. You know something is changing, but you don't know exactly what.' (R1, niece)

Practical and emotional support

'Then there was a nurse who was sweet, who comforted me: "He'll get used to it and so are you". That's what I needed.' (R5, daughter)

Conclusions & Suggestions

- Family caregivers need practical and emotional support.
- The collaboration between family and professional caregivers, and information transfer during nursing home admission can be improved.
- The results are used as input for the action research team (consisting of stakeholders) to improve to the transition to the nursing home.
- The next step is to analyze the data of persons with dementia (interviews) and healthcare professionals (focus group).

Contact information

