

Supportive and therapeutic environments

Challenges and coping strategies in family-based dementia care in the Philippines

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Abstract

Background: The National Dementia Plan in the Philippines has just started. While there are existing pre-planned strategies on dementia prevention and treatment, long-term or sustained home-based care for patients with dementia is limited taking into account that the Philippines is still a developing country that is challenged by inadequate government-funding/s and resources. Hence, there is a call for the National Dementia Plan to place further consideration on the country's population characteristics as well as of its culture of care that are cognizant primarily of the value of family care practices in the dementia in local setting.

Purpose: 1) To identify the challenges experienced and the coping strategies used by Filipino families as they take care of patients with dementia in their homes. 2) To describe the home environment and surrounding cultural systems in which Filipino families provide with patient with dementia.

Method: Ten family caregivers were interviewed. Data derived were organized into categories and major themes.

Results: The study found that the family caregivers, in spite of the limitations in resources and amidst severity of symptoms, can adapt to the different challenges and situations surrounding the care for patient with dementia at home. Apparently, cultural values inherent in local setting such as close-family ties and the seeming dictum that Filipino households are bound to take care of their elderlies were likewise found to have an invaluable role in dementia care. Also, being a Christian country adjunct to the situation that most of Filipino families are Catholics, religion and faith were identified as prime coping mechanisms related to dementia-care.

Recommendations: 1) Encourage consistent and sustained involvement of the family in the provision of care for patients with dementia (inclusive primarily of social, financial, and psychological support), 2) Develop and/or refine health-care policies strengthened and supported by research-based data on home-based dementia care germane to local setting.