

An Exploration into the Experiences of the Care Assistants Working with the Sufferers of Dementia.

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Abstract

The aim of the research was to explore the experiences of the care assistants working with the sufferers of dementia. In order to answer the research question “how does care work with dementia sufferers affect the care assistants”, a qualitative method was adopted. Eight in-depth semi structured interviews were conducted using an all female sample. The interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, aided by Nvivo 10 software, in which five main themes of the study were identified. The findings of the research portrayed a variety of both shared and individual experiences of the care assistants, highlighting the diversity surrounding dementia care. The researcher found both similarities and disparities when comparing past research results to the current research findings, which are discussed in detail within the discussion section of the research. A variety of limitations and recommendations further research are addressed in said section.

Introduction

Dementia is a serious memory and psychiatric disorder that affects not just the person with dementia but also those closest to them.

The majority of research that has been conducted in the area of dementia care is from a family carers perspective with a serious lack of attention being paid to the care assistants outside of family ties. Literature around the topic of dementia care highlighted the possible triggers of stress within the work place, factors in creating burnout, the low level of respect and status being shown to carers and an overall lack of education in the field.

The aim of the research was to gain insight into the experiences of caring for dementia carers from a professional carer perspective, gaining a clearer understanding of what is evolved throughout dementia care.



Method

A qualitative approach was adopted in order to answer the research question “how does care work with dementia sufferers affect the care assistants”?

In-depth semi structured interviews were chosen to conduct eight interviews, all of which were done using an all Irish female sample.

The sample were chosen using both purposive sampling methods and a convenience based sampling method. The participants were chosen based on years of experience, gender and education and training.

Each interview was transcribed verbatim, with the data then being thematically analysed by Nvivo 10 software, in order to develop themes and patterns within the data.

Results

Following the thematic analysis of the interview data, five main themes of the findings were discovered including;

Stress of care assistants

Work burn out

Experiences of aggression by dementia patients

Value in the work place

Staff morale

Discussion

The aim of the research was to explore the experiences of the care assistants working with the sufferers of dementia, by comparing and contrasting previous literature done in the area of dementia care to the findings of the current research, both similarities and disparities arose. The variety of findings and attitude of the sample, illustrated to the researcher the individualistic nature of dementia care.

Certain limitations to the study were made apparent from the results, such as small sample size and lack of ethnic culture within participants. These limitations lead the researcher to suggest recommendations for further research to gain a deeper insight into the affects caused by dementia care.

References

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