

Session Identifier: D.4

Session Theme: Care Work

Friday, June 17, 2016

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

“I Just Didn’t See What Her Big Problem Was”: The Gendered Logic of Dependency in Nursing Student Attitudes Towards Family Caregiving

Dr. Katie Aubrecht, Mount Saint Vincent University; Dr. Catherine Ward-Griffin, University of Western Ontario; Dr. Nancy Guberman, University of Quebec, Montreal (retired); Dr. Janice Keefe, Mount Saint Vincent University; Pamela Fancey, Nova Scotia Centre on Aging

This presentation shares results from a critical discourse analysis of the reflective journals of 10 third-year nursing students from two universities in Atlantic Canada. Students administered the C.A.R.E. Tool, a validated psychosocial assessment tool for family caregivers, with 100 older heterosexual caregivers of a spouse living with dementia. Following each assessment they recorded reflections on their learning experiences in journal entries semi-structured by guiding questions. The research team employed an iterative process of analysis using a coding scheme that was developed from the journal questions and emergent themes from the journal entries. Findings were interpreted using feminist and disability studies theoretical frameworks to understand the significance of unexamined individual and societal assumptions about care. The analysis yielded significant learnings for nursing education. Journal reflections revealed that students’ perceptions of family caregivers were structured by a gendered logic of dependency. Within the journals students shared their understanding of family caregiving as a job for both men and women, but also a domestic duty for women. Despite visible transformations in students’ learning, enhanced empathy, and awareness of the complexities of caregiving and unmet needs of families, gendered assumptions about caregiving in late life and disability (dementia) persisted. As students conducted formal assessments they also informally assessed caregiver needs for support based on gendered expectations about how family caregivers ought to think and feel about their work. Learnings suggest gendered assumptions in the nursing profession may contribute to attitudinal barriers to recognizing family caregivers as partners in care.

What is the State of the Knowledge Related to Home Support Worker Safety?

Dr. Marilyn Macdonald, Dalhousie University

Life expectancy is increasing in high income countries accompanied by rising rates of chronic diseases and varying levels of disability. The inability to perform at least one activity of daily living for the over 75 year olds varies from a low of 17% in a high income country to 40% in developing countries. The need for assistance with activities of daily living is largely met by family members and home support workers. Although injury rates for home care workers are not available those for nursing home workers are. In Canada workers in the health and social services industries lead the way in injuries with 40,814 exceeding manufacturing at 36,189 and construction at 27,432. The safety and wellbeing of the home support worker is the subject of this scoping review.

Objectives

1. Examine the home care literature in relation to the home support worker and safety
2. Identify a set of patterns related to home support worker safety
3. Provide recommendations related to home support worker safety

Results were analyzed using interpretative description, a qualitative methodology with three elements; the objective, the mechanisms, and the product. In our review, the objective was to develop a credible conceptual explanation of home support worker safety. The mechanisms used were: identifying and extracting multiple relevant sources of textual data following scoping review methods; and synthesizing the data to identify a set of patterns. The product was four patterns. These patterns are: work environment induced injuries, interpersonal relationships, human resources planning and injury prevention initiatives.