“I Just Didn’t See What Her Big Problem Was”

The Gendered Logic of Dependency In Nursing Student Attitudes Towards Family Caregiving

Aubrecht, K., Ward-Griffin, C., Guberman, N., Keefe, J., & Fancey, P.

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Overview

• Research Aim

• Background
  • Context - Family Dementia Caregiving
  • The C.A.R.E. Tool
  • Timing of the C.A.R.E. Tool Study - Objective 2

• Theoretical Framework

• Methodology & Analysis

• Findings/Discussion
Overarching Aim of Analysis:

• Understand **attitudinal barriers to recognizing family caregivers as partners in care**, by examining nursing students’ tacit assumptions about caregiving

Material Analyzed:

• Semi-structured journal reflections following administration of the C.A.R.E. Tool caregiver assessment with family dementia caregivers
Context... The Difference Dementia Makes
The C.A.R.E. Tool
(Guberman, Keefe, Fancey, Barylak, 2006)

- An assessment of Caregivers’ Aspirations, Realities and Expectations
- A multi-dimensional psycho-social assessment instrument
- Designed to collect information from the caregivers’ perspective on the many different aspects of his/her situation
- Looking to pinpoint the key areas of difficulty being experienced by the caregivers
- Specific difficulties can then be matched with supports that would assist the caregiver
Study Objective 2

Approach: Time 1 - Nurse trainees completed questionnaire. Trainees completed a reflective journal of experience for each completed assessment.

Time 2 – Similar questionnaire and additional questions.

Sample: 12 nurse trainees from two Schools of Nursing in NS and PEI. They had some knowledge and skill in assessing various client and family health challenges, such as dementia.

Status: 10 of the 12 nursing trainees involved participated. Journals were coded and thematic analysis conducted.
Methodology & Analysis

• Semi-structured Reflective Journaling
• Coded Using Themes from Guiding Questions
• Concept Mapping
• Critical Discourse Analysis
• Interpreted from Feminist Disability Studies Perspective
Nursing Students’ Perceptions of Family Dementia Caregiving

Themes

- Complex Journey
- Duty (Obligation)
- Sacrifice (Offering)
- Isolating Experience
Gendered Logic of Dependency

• recognition of the complexity of caregiving and enhanced empathy for caregivers

• family caregiving a **job** for both men and women, but also a **domestic duty** for women
  • male caregivers go ‘above and beyond’ call of duty

• presumed **loss of normalcy** in dementia caregiving (‘giving up’)
  • labour grievable for men
  • labour characteristic for woman
Caregiving requires a lot of patience, love and dedication, which this man clearly has. It’s a requirement to care give (on top of giving up a social life, and their previous ‘normal’ life). (Jane)

I come from a family with very strong ‘maternalistic’ mothers that care for the family, the husband, do the housework etc. I know that this isn’t always the case and that things have changed over the years so much, but I suppose my assumption that a spouse would automatically ‘give up’ their freedom to care for their spouse comes from my own family... (Margaret)
... like he had no cognitive impairment, no physical impairment, just a little bit of extra care that comes along with normal aging processes, so it was different talking to her. She was just caring for her aging husband as opposed to the person I interviewed before her who was caring for a severely disabled spouse with advanced Alzheimer’s. I guess, I just didn’t see what her big problem was.

Informally assessing caregivers’ deservingness of support based on how they should think and feel about their work.
In one assessment when a husband was caring for his wife with advanced Alzheimer’s it was just a really, it was really sad. It was sad for him. I could see, I knew all the positives with him being able to talk about it but it was a lot emotionally to deal with knowing that this man is going through this and you felt so, you just felt for him. I guess it was emotional challenges, trying to get it out of your mind when you’re falling asleep at night, I guess.
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Questions? Comments?

katie.aubrecht@msvu.ca

Thanks For your time!