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WHAT IS AN AUTONOMY SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT IN GERIATRIC CARE SERVICES FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS?

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Statement of the Problem: Based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985), autonomy support appears to be a key factor for patients in geriatric care services (GCS) for the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Souesme et al., 2016). However, none studies have been conducted with healthcare professionals about “what elements might compose an autonomy-supportive environment?” That is why; it looked interesting to clarify the behaviors underlying an autonomy-supportive motivational style in GCS.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: Four focus groups were used with a semi-structured guide (Patton, 2002) to explore the point of view of healthcare professionals about an autonomy-supportive environment. Twenty-six (n=26) professionals representing all professions working on GCS were recruited. Content qualitative analyses were performed using a software analysis (NVivo 10-QSR International).

Findings: Unlike Reeve (1998), our results based on queries for text analysis highlighted three categories defining the notion of autonomy support in health context. Those categories point out well the importance of the social link between medical staff and patient through the “promotion of progress”, the importance of “establish a relationship of trust”, and the necessity to “encourage them to express themselves”.

Conclusion & Significance: Our results demonstrate that the welcome are crucial to make the stay in GCS positive. Developing a partnership between patients and healthcare professionals could be a successful way to improve the stay in GCS, bring positive psychological and physical outcomes for elderly patients like a better adherence to treatment (Williams et al., 1998), and reduce re-hospitalization. We need now to further define the patient’s point of view of an autonomy-supportive environment in order to compare it with healthcare professional’s definition, underlying common and diverging points. This will allow us to make recommendations and propose a training session for professionals to adopt an autonomy-supportive motivational style.

Biography

Guillaume Souesme is in the second year of a doctoral program in psychology at François-Rabelais University in Tours (FRANCE). It is attached to the EA 2114 – Research Team of Psychology of Ages of Life, under the direction of Professor Claude Ferrand. His subject of study concerns the “satisfaction of basic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, motivation, well-being and ageing on the “Région Centre-Val de Loire”. The field of study of this research focuses on French geriatric care services, also called SSR present in the hospitals structure or being autonomous, public and / or private. Finally, he uses the theory of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as a theoretical basis.

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