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AGEING CARERS AND THEIR AGEING FAMILY MEMBER WITH MILD-MODERATE INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IN HONG KONG: WHAT NEEDS AND CARE DO THEY HAVE?

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Statement of the Problem: Understanding the difficulties of the ageing carers in providing care to their ageing family member with an intellectual disability (ID) can help to facilitate the development of appropriate services and interventions to strengthen both parties' capacity to continue with the duties and obligations associated with filial piety in the Chinese society. However, little is known about the caring needs and types of care provided by ageing family carers when caring for their community-dwelling ageing ID family members in Hong Kong.

Methodology: This paper presents the qualitative data of 16 ageing family carers who were matched against family members with mild or moderate ID and using a sheltered workshop. Audio-taped interviews lasted 45-60 minute and data were content-analyzed.

Results: Mothers were found to be the major carers, and were either housewife or have retired from work. Since birth, they have provided long-term special care to their family member with ID, and witnessed wavering changes in self-care abilities over the years. Indeed, the ID members still had different caring needs that continued to linger into adulthood. The data highlighted a heightened realization of family carers to refocus on the way they have always provided care, and to give considerations to instil strategies that would help the ID members to build greater independence to manage their daily life in later life, especially when both parties are already ageing or are soon-to-be old.

Conclusion: Findings can provide an understanding of the caring needs and types of care that ageing family carers provide to their ageing ID adult who are currently using a sheltered workshop. Further support for the ageing family carers to continue with their caring roles is also highlighted. More data are needed to explore the importance and urgency attached to the different needs and the level of independence or protectiveness family carers prescribe to providing care to their family members with ID.

Biography

Lisa PL Low works as an Associate Professor. Her research interests are gerontology and long-term care, with emphasis on the organization of gerontological care and practices, discharge planning for older patients and family members. Her Ph.D. thesis adopts a constructivist grounded theory approach to explore decision-making in residential care homes from the perspectives of older residents, family members and care providers. This work has now been extended to explore family decision-making of older people with mild-moderate dementia and for clients with intellectual disability using predominately qualitative research approaches. As part of her post-doctoral development her intentions are to continue to develop qualitative research approaches and methodologies in her academic and research career.

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