A pilot training programme to empower foreign domestic workers for quality dementia care

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Introduction
Dementia is a common degenerative brain disease characterized by progressive impairment of memory, intellectual and daily functioning. In Hong Kong, the prevalence of dementia in elderly age 70 or above was as high as 9.3% and the prevalence rate is expected to double every 20 years. Dementia has become a major burden in health care resources. This is especially true in elderly suffering from the behavioural and psychiatric symptoms of dementia (BPSD). In Hong Kong, the employment of live-in foreign domestic workers as care worker for the elderly has become one of the more common de facto modes of eldercare. However, most of the foreign domestic workers are not trained personnel, let alone professionals, their understanding to dementia and the experience to deal with BPSD are likely not adequate. Caregiver training is an important intervention to provide insight and knowledge to the caregiver to take care of these elderly. At present, only few non-governmental organizations and the maid agencies offer training in eldercare for the foreign domestic workers. Training programme that is specially tailored for caring elderly with dementia is scanty. This situation highlights a service gap in providing support to the foreign domestic worker caring elderly with dementia.

Objectives
1) To organize training workshop for the foreign domestic workers to take care of elderly with dementia, aiming to enhance their knowledge on dementia and reduce their caring burden
2) To evaluate the training workshop in terms of acceptability, feasibility in application and the effectiveness

Methodology
The training was organized in collaboration with the Hong Kong Alzheimer’s Disease
Association, whom provided the venue, clerical support and respite care for the elderly. The foreign domestic workers were recruited from the Domestic Worker Support Group of the Kwai Chung Hospital. Five workshops were organized, covering topics that included knowledge on dementia, the techniques of dealing with common BPSD, cognitive training, home physiotherapy and nutrition. The workshops were conducted by experienced psychiatrist, psychiatric nurses, occupational therapist and physiotherapist of the Kwai Chung Hospital. In the first and last workshop, the participants were required to complete the Caregiving Hassles Scale and a test comprising of 10MCQs. They were also asked to fill in the feedback questionnaire in the last workshop.

**Result**
32 foreign domestic workers took part in the training. Misconception in dealing with the BPSD of dementia was common. There was a decrease in the subjective burden in dealing with the elderly’s behavior after the workshop. The workshops were well-received by the participants. All of the participants satisfied with our programme and were interested in attending our future workshop.