



Service Priorities and Programmes
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Self-management Carer Support Group with health care professionals input

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Introduction

According to Steinberg et al. (2008), up to 90% of dementia patient will exhibit one or more BPSD during the course of the illness. Patient with BPSD are agitated, uncooperative, distressing and disturbing. Caring for a family member with BPSD is both fulfilling and demanding and hence caregivers would be easily burnt out (Chiao, Wu & Hsiao, 2015). Fung & Chien (2002) had examined effectiveness of providing a mutual support program for family caregivers of a relative with dementia in Hong Kong. It found that relatives of family members with dementia showed greater improvement in distress levels and quality of life after participating in the support group. A systematic review by Huis in Het Veld et al. (2015) also indicated that professional self-management support interventions were effective in increasing psychological wellbeing of caregivers who cared for family members with dementia. In view of caregivers' daily challenges with associated stress, self-management carer support group with health care professional input was conducted which aims at reducing caregivers' distress in addition to increasing their knowledge in dementia care and targeted handling skills.

Objectives

The objectives were listed as below: 1. To provide the chance for caregivers to ventilate their stress and concerns with peer support 2. To increase caregivers' knowledge in dementia and targeted caring skills 3. To reduce caregivers' distress 4. To monitor effectiveness of self-management carer support group

Methodology

The program consisted of 5 monthly sessions of carer support program which lasted for 2 hours from August to December, 2017. The participants were the caregivers of dementia clients in in-patient and out-patient settings. Each session consisted of (1) individual experience sharing and ventilation (2) psychological support from peers and health professionals (3) briefing of patient's current condition and targeted handling skills (4) introduction of community resources and brief relaxation skills. Pre-test and post-test design was adopted. Caregivers were assessed by Zarit Caregiver Burden Interview, self-reported stress level (ranged from score 1-10) and client satisfaction survey at the beginning and the end of the program.

Result

For caregivers who participated in consecutive sessions, two of them showed decrease of caregiver burden from "severe" to "moderate" whereas two other caregivers showed decrease of caregiver burden from "Moderate" to Mild" and " Mild" to "little" respectively. Besides, the self-reported stress level of caregivers generally decreased after each session of carer support group. The caregivers showed positive feedbacks on the program. Out of the 26 returned program satisfaction survey, over 90 % of caregivers agreed or strongly agreed that their knowledge on dementia and related caring skills increased after participating in carer support group. In addition, they gained emotional and spiritual support from professionals and peers. Most of them satisfied with the group arrangement.