

ABSTRACT

Relational and supportive interventions for residents living with dementia who like to walk

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In this presentation, I will be providing the background, aims and potential benefits of my doctoral study. Globally, the rate of people diagnosed with dementia is increasing at an alarming rate. The World Health Organization has declared dementia a public health priority. As part of the progression of this condition, there are numerous behavioural changes, which often include a period of excessive walking, commonly referred to as wandering. International studies have found that the use of antipsychotic medications to manage this walking behaviour is widespread in many aged care facilities. This pharmacologic intervention is not in line with best practice. These medications have adverse effects on residents causing over-sedation, increased risks of falls and stroke, hospitalisations and even deaths. Hence, I am carrying out this study focussing on four aims: 1) to investigate the first interventions staff provide for residents who like to walk; 2) to find out from all participants, including the residents themselves, their perspectives on the meaning of the walking behaviour; 3) to examine the impact of built environment on the walking behaviour and 4) to explore participants' understanding of person-centred care. This qualitative study uses a social constructionist methodology and critical ethnography to answer the research question. I have used purposive sampling technique to recruit participants from three aged residential care facilities who met selection criteria. To date, I have collected data in two facilities from staff, family members who hold enduring powers of attorneys, and residents, using observations and in-depth interviews, following the five stages recommended by Carspecken (1996). Data analysis is underway. On completion, I will make recommendations based on the findings which I hope will benefit various stakeholders, reinforce best practice, influence policies, contribute to nursing education. My goal is to support inclusivity and remove the stigmatised label of 'wandering'.

References

Carspecken, P. F. (1996). *Critical ethnography in educational research: A theoretical and practical guide*. Routledge.