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The Treatment of Social Networks and Safety Status of Filipino Older Persons Experiencing Elder Abuse

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Purpose:

Filipinos value family. To Filipinos, the family is the center of the social structure (Jocano, 1966). As a family-centered country, Filipinos takes responsibility for its members, particularly for the old and the sick. Providing care for the older person remains a moral obligation for families in the Philippines. However, with the continuous change in the economy, there are many families in the Philippines who at times can no longer provide the necessities making them incapable of fulfilling their duty to support the older person under their care.

Although Filipinos are very well known to value family and respect their elders, still a number of alarming cases of elder abuse in Filipino homes and community occur (COSE, 2017). Although elder abuse is happening in the Philippines, it remains invisible and unaddressed. Only a few incidents are being reported and often the outcomes are unclear and uneven.

A research commissioned by the Coalition of Services for the Elderly (COSE, 2006) showed that older persons in the Philippines are left alone to fend for themselves or are dependent on their immediate family members for many of their activities of daily living. Often, this dependence becomes a burden.

The purpose of this research was to assess the HEARTS of older persons in the Philippines. An Acronym used for H-Health, EA- Experience of Abuse, R-Resilience, T-Treatment, and S-Safety. The treatment of social networks and their safety were assessed in this study. Results of this research could benefit older persons towards the comprehensive, person-centered, efficient, and effective delivery of nursing care that is responsive to their needs.

Methods:

The study explored the HEARTS of older persons and used an Interview schedule with open-ended questions that determined the treatment and safety of older persons.

The expert made a 10 item open-ended research questionnaire for the interview schedule with the participants explored the treatment afforded to them by their social networks and their feeling of safety. For the safety status of the respondent, the researchers used an interview with open-ended questions to gather data. These were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The interview schedule generated rich information from the participants by using open-ended questions. Colaizzi's (1978) distinctive seven-step process provides a rigorous analysis, with each step staying close to the data. The end result is a concise yet encompassing all of the descriptions of the phenomenon under study, validated by the participants through member checks.

Results:

We were able to generate findings that resulted in themes. For the frail older persons, the major themes are social network and self. The first theme social network includes three (3) sub-themes. The first sub-theme is support from significant others which has minor themes: communication, obedience, respect and good treatment. The second sub-theme is unhealthy communication which has minor themes: lack of

attention, lack of support, and lack of love and belongingness. The third sub-theme is an unfair treatment which includes minor themes: oppression, maltreatment, deceit, spreading rumors, and verbal abuse. The second theme is self which also includes three (3) sub-themes. The first sub-theme is self-diversion which includes minor themes: self-diversion activities through interaction with other people, and self-dependence. The second sub-theme is ineffective coping which has minor themes: harbors emotion, intellectualization, avoidance, don't feel the emotion, and uncertainty. The third sub-theme is effective coping and the minor themes are express anger, forgiveness, resilient, striving to be resilient, aspiration, and inviolability.

For the active older persons, the major themes are self and social network. The first theme is self which includes three (3) sub-themes. The first sub-theme is ineffective coping which has minor themes: avoidance and harbors emotion. The second sub-theme is a response which has minor themes: positive response and mini-themes: acquiring the right attitude towards self and others, vigilance, fear, resilient, inviolability. The second minor theme is a negative response which has a mini-theme of suicidal thoughts. The second theme is the social network which includes two (2) sub-themes. The first sub-theme is a positive response which has a minor theme: support from significant others, diversion-related activities through interaction with other people, communication, good treatment, and respect. The second sub-theme is a negative response which has a minor theme: unfair treatment and a mini theme: depression and maltreatment. The second minor theme is unhealthy communication which includes sub-theme: verbal abuse, economic abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect.

Conclusion:

The study gave evidence that older persons use self- help activities in order to relieve the pains of abuse through interactions/communication with other people. Although there are times that they resort to harboring their emotions because their family does not support them making them turn to friends and acquaintances for support. The participants are vigilant with their surrounding because they fear for their safety. It is because they experience lack of attention, lack of support, and lack of belongingness because their family left them forcing them to fend for themselves. According to Pillimer (1989), abuse and neglect can affect an older adult's health, happiness, and safety. Older adults experienced different kinds of harm from people they rely on or trust. Abuse of older adults can occur at home, in the community, or in institutional settings. For older people, the consequences of abuse can be especially serious. Older people are physically weaker and more vulnerable than younger adults, their bones are more brittle and convalescence takes longer. Even a relatively minor injury can cause serious and permanent damage. Many older people survive on limited incomes so that the loss of even a small sum of money can have a significant impact.

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Keywords:

Resilience, Safety status and Social Networks

References:

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Abstract Summary:

We examined safety as part of our qualitative assessment of older persons using their social networks and use of technology as a social support intervention.

Comments to Organizers:

Unwithdrawn with session

Content Outline:

Background

- A. The value of older persons
- B. Elder abuse in Filipino homes and community occur
- C. Continuous change in the Philippine economy

Results

- A. Themes and sub-themes
- B. Unhealthy communication: verbal abuse, economic abuse, sexual abuse, neglect
- C. Unfair treatment and a mini theme: depression and maltreatment

First Primary Presenting Author

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Author Summary: She teaches gerontological nursing at Centro Escolar University in Manila, Philippines. She has completed a research as PI on assessing the HEARTS of older persons in Manila, Philippines.