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An Investigation on the Core Competencies of Professional Dementia Caregivers

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Purpose:
As of 2018, Taiwan has become an aged society. The prevalence of dementia has risen every year as the population continues to age. In order to meet the rapidly growing demands for dementia care in the future, training dementia professional caregivers has become one of the most significant issues in the development of long-term care in Taiwan. During the course of caring for people with dementia, both nurses and nursing attendants are considered among professional caregivers to be direct caregivers. To improve the quality and effectiveness of care, professional caregivers must be grounded in core competencies, although at present there are few studies that specifically discuss the core competencies that are required of dementia professional caregivers. The purpose of this study is to investigate the core competencies of professional dementia caregivers as a basis for establishing their core competencies and to provide a reference for the planning of dementia care training programs in schools and other related organizations.

Methods:
The modified Delphi technique was adopted in this study. A total of 17 academic or practical dementia experts were invited to participate. Their average experience in the field of dementia care is over 15 years. The study was divided into two phases. The first phase was the preparation work before the questionnaire was finalized. The research team first collected and consolidated relevant literature on the abilities of dementia care, then analyzed and summarized the types and corresponding indicators of the core competencies of professional dementia caregivers. Expert consultations were conducted twice at this stage to confirm the expert validity of the core competencies. The second phase was the implementation stage of the study. After two rounds of expert surveys, the core competencies and their corresponding indicators were established according to the revised results, and the “Dementia Care Professional Competency Assessment Scale” was produced and distributed to assess the core competencies of professional dementia caregivers.
Results:
This study applied the modified Delphi method. The expert responses to the two rounds of surveys focused on the number of questions on each core competency, redundant or unclear expressions in the questions, revisions, and the consistency of terminology. Based on the literature analysis and expert opinions, nine core competencies of professional dementia caregivers were established: (1) identification of dementia and understanding of dementia diagnosis; (2) daily life caring and behavioral problem handling; (3) palliative care of dementia; (4) interpersonal communication and teamwork; (5) ethics and law; (6) prevention and health promotion; (7) friendly environment; (8) family support and service resources; and (9) self-care of professional caregivers, as well as their corresponding core competency indicators.

Conclusion:
The focus of this study was to explore the core competencies of professional dementia caregivers. It established the professional core competencies that professional dementia caregivers should possess by summarizing the core competencies in the existing literature and obtaining an expert consensus using the Delphi technique. The results of this study can be used as a basis for establishing the core competencies of professional dementia caregivers, as well as serve as a reference for the planning of dementia care programs in schools and workplace training programs for dementia care, in order to ensure that the training fulfills the core competencies required of professional dementia caregivers.

Title:
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Abstract Describes:
Ongoing Work/Project

Applicable category:
Students

Keywords:
caregiver, competency and dementia

References:
Nai-Ying Ko, Chia-Yin Hsieh, Yen-Chin Chen, Chen-Hsi Tsai, Hsiao-Ying Liu, & Li-Fang Liu (2015). Applying the Modified Delphi Technique to Develop the Role of HIV Case

**Abstract Summary:**
The purpose of this study is to investigate the core competencies of professional dementia caregivers as a basis for establishing their core competencies and to provide a reference for the planning of dementia care training programs in schools and other related organizations.

**Content Outline:**
An Investigation on the Core Competencies of Professional Dementia Caregivers

**Introduction**
1. Background and purpose
   o The Dementia prevalence in Taiwan.
   o The content of dementia care competencies.

**Body**
1. Methods
   o The modified Delphi technique.
   o Establishment of the core competencies of professional dementia caregivers.
   o Development of the assessment tool.
   o Establishment of the reliability and validity of the assessment tool.
2. Results
   o Nine core competencies of professional dementia caregivers.
   o The reliability and validity of the “Dementia Care Professional Competency Assessment Scale”.
   o The distribution pattern of nine core competencies.

**Conclusion**
This study explores the core competencies of professional dementia caregiver, obtains the consensus of experts through the modified Delphi method, and establishes the core competencies that a nursing staff should possess in the dementia care profession. It is expected to be provided as the basis for guiding the training education for professional dementia caregiver.