



Research Grants

Abstract Form

Parkinson's disease (PD) is a degenerative neurological illness that affects 1.5 million people in the U.S., with 60,000 new cases diagnosed each year. PD is often diagnosed in persons over age 65, a group which is projected to grow 54% between the years of 2000 and 2020. Family caregivers often play a role in care which includes understanding the disease process, treatment plans, and helping their loved ones continue to live in the community as long as possible. As this complex chronic disease progresses, caregivers are often forced to make painful decisions about whether and when to institutionalize the person with PD. The focus of the proposed study is to understand the process by which family caregivers make the decision to place a relative with PD in a nursing home. Grounded Theory, which is an interpretive research method that focuses on understanding the meaning of phenomena as they are perceived and experienced by study participants, will center on this decision making process and the integral factors that result in nursing home placement. Open-ended, loosely structured interview questions will allow for the discovery of how the subjects perceive these phenomena without imposing the researcher's ideas or categories. Rigor in this study will follow evidence based standards of qualitative research. To maintain consistency with grounded theory research design, the data will be analyzed using dimensional analysis, a comparative analytic strategy designed specifically for use with narrative texts in grounded theory studies. Knowledge from this study will help rehabilitation nurses understand a) factors involved in facility placement decision making and b) family caregiver needs in order to better manage the care of a relative with PD at home. Understanding caregiver

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needs and perceptions will facilitate the development of tailored interventions for disability management through innovative service delivery methods, community resources, education, and caregiver support. Supporting the caregiver especially in adapting to the effect of disability on role functioning will fill a needed research gap and may prevent premature institutionalization of the PD patient.

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