

2nd International Conference on **Geriatrics & Gerontology**

August 24-26, 2015 Toronto, Canada

The impact of mode of assignment on relational care in nursing homes

Elizabeth Andersen and Jude Spiers

The University of British Columbia, Canada

In Canada, over the past decade, care aides' assistive and caring roles have expanded considerably due to dramatic shifts in staffing patterns in nursing homes. These shifts are due in part to tremendous health care cost pressures faced by federal and provincial governments and in part to new approaches to health care delivery. In contemporary approaches, the presence of Registered Nurses in long-term care facilities has diminished, while care aides are employed in escalating numbers. Care aides have become the most central or the most accessible/available service providers to residents. In many facilities, teams of care aides who used provided care to all residents have been abolished. Newer approaches favor consistent (non-rotating) assignment of residents to care aides. In theory, consistent assignments foster closer, more intimate relationships between care aides and nursing home residents and facilitate familiarity between care aides and families of residents. This ethnographic study is a portrayal of care aides' thoughts and feelings about their consistent assignments. Experiential data were collected from 22 care aides working in five nursing homes in a western Canadian city. The data were analyzed utilizing constant comparison to identify common themes. Care aides who were consistently assigned to residents described working without reference to each other. Some described losing contact with residents/families not assigned to them. Others described feeling overwhelmed, isolated, and confined by this mode of assignment and described a strong need for collegial fellowship and friendship. Experienced care aides stressed the importance of shared tasks, interchangeable tasks, and joint decisions, and indicated that a return to teamwork would help them to moderate or buffer the effects of stressful events and/or work environments.

Biography

Elizabeth Andersen PhD, RN, is an Assistant Professor in the School of Nursing, Faculty of Health and Social Development, University of British Columbia. Her research is focused on exploring specific components of nursing home cultural change models and their effects on residents, families, and paid caregivers. She is especially interested in the working conditions and expanding roles of more marginalized nursing home employees (care aides).

elizabeth.andersen@ubc.ca

Notes: