

Study

Transitioning to long-term care home: The experiences of older adults, family members, service providers and policy makers

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Purpose of Study

- To offer clinical and policy recommendations that:
 - aim to improve families' and older adults' experiences with the transition into long-term care
 - consider the policy and practice context in which service providers, older adults and families must function

Findings from the Literature

- Small but growing literature on transitions from perspective of family members
- Transition into long-term care is a process that involves:
 - the decision-making period
 - the waiting period
 - making the move
 - the adjustment period

Decision Making Period

- Highly Stressful
- Complicated by ethos of community care
- What families value:
 - When professionals state 'it is time'
 - When everything else has been tried (e.g. all medical interventions, all community services)
 - When they are given good information and support from professionals (not just a list of homes)
 - When they have control over the process (not given unreasonable time lines or limited list of choices)

Waiting Period

- Often characterized by a period of minimal professional involvement followed by imminent need to move
- What families value:
 - Periodic contact with updates about the status of their file
 - Interim support and services

Making the Move

- Often experienced as “a whirlwind”
- What families value:
 - Some contact with home itself before move
 - Feeling they and their families are expected
 - Flexible admission times
 - Being asked questions about likes/dislikes and habits of resident
 - Information about the process of the admission (how long it will take, what to bring)
 - Good communication between providers

Adjustment

- For family partners in care who co-resided with the resident, intense loss (separation) may be experienced
 - Often caregivers not prepared for this reaction
- Easier for families when resident accepts move and settles quickly
- Easier for families when families are confident their relative is receiving high quality care by caring staff
- Families value being encouraged to visit at their convenience
- Families value having a contact person

Gaps in the Literature

- Literature is based on families' experiences
 - Far fewer studies look at older adults: their needs and experiences may differ from families
 - Residents often don't deal with the instrumental issues associated with the move so what's important to them on moving day? What helps older adults adjust?

Gaps in the Literature

- Perspectives of service providers and policy makers absent
- Impossible to determine implications for ‘best practice’ without understanding policy context and the perceptions and experiences of service providers
 - What do providers think residents and families need? Does this ‘match’ what residents and families say they need?
 - What are policies and systems that challenge good communication between providers?

Study Questions

- How is each temporal phase in transitional care – the decision-making period, the waiting period, the move and the initial adjustment experienced and perceived by families, older adults and service providers?
- What do policy makers consider when making decisions around policies impacting transitions?
- How similar or divergent are stakeholders' perspectives and experiences?
- How can we better meet the needs of all stakeholders in order to ease the transition process for residents and their family members?

Method

- 4 participating nursing homes in GTA
- Semi-structured interviews with:
 - (1) Older Adults and Family
 - interviewed within two weeks of moving into the nursing home
 - (2) Service Providers in Nursing Homes & Community
 - (3) Policy Makers
 - Decision makers from the MOHLTC and LHINs
- All interviews audio taped, transcribed and analysed using grounded theory methodology

Dissemination

- All participating organizations including policy makers will be offered presentations and executive summaries of the results
- Final report will be available through MAREP upon completion
- May be interesting to gather community providers, LTC providers and policy makers together for a presentation and discussion