

International Conference on Geriatrics & Gerontology

July 08-10, 2014 DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Chicago-North Shore Conference Center, USA

Family caregivers' perceptions and experiences of caring for a close relative with dementia in China

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Aim: To explore family caregivers' experiences of caring for a close relative with dementia in China.

Methods: This was a general narrative qualitative study. Purposive sampling was used to enroll eight Chinese family caregivers who were taking care of relatives with dementia. Data were collected using two semi-structured focus-group interviews. Thematic analysis based on the hermeneutic meaning interpretation method was conducted.

Results: Four themes emerged from the family caregivers about their caregiving experiences: The perceived burden, signs and symptoms of dementia affecting caregivers' everyday life, loss of self, and seeking personal growth.

Conclusion: The findings revealed that caring for a relative with dementia was challenging. It posed significant threats to the family caregivers' physical health as well as their psychological wellbeing. It is imperative for society, the community and health care professionals to recognize caregivers' actual or potential health problems and offer them necessary assistance.

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