Evaluation of the educational programme for caregivers of the elderly in Windhoek and Rehoboth, Namibia

Joan M. Kloppers*, Louise Pretorius, Alfreda R. E. Kloppers

University of Namibia; University of Namibia; University of Namibia Private Bag 13301 340 Mandume Ndemufaye Ave, Pionierspark Windhoek
*Corresponding author E-mail: jkloppers@unam.na

Abstract

There are many reasons why the elderly may be in need of care, for example, if an elderly person suffers a medical illness, such as a stroke or a diagnosis of dementia or Alzheimer's disease, he/she may need assistance and care (Boehlke, 2001).
Another major problem for elderly people is the prevalence of co-morbidity (several chronic diseases in one person) which makes treatment and quality of care and life more difficult. In many instances care for the frail elderly, especially in long-term care institutions, is provided under minimal supervision by caregivers who lay people. This can lead to poor-quality care or neglect of the frail elderly. Clarke (2008) stated that the role of the caregiver involves the application to the principles of caring at any level of care. A qualitative, explorative, descriptive, contextual and phenomenology design was used to perform this study.
The purpose of this study was to develop, implement and evaluate a supportive educational programme for caregivers of the elderly in old-age homes in Windhoek.
The study was conducted in three phases. Firstly, a situational analysis was carried out to explore and describe the experiences and needs of the caregivers and the elderly. The situation analysis revealed themes in terms of interpersonal relationships that could be positive or negative regarding the elderly, with the sub-themes like communication, support and caring for elderly people. These themes and sub-themes include the following: Interpersonal relationships were viewed as an important aspect of the caring process. Lack of regular in-service training sessions for caregivers, with a subtheme of a lack of adequate knowledge of procedures. Lack of human resources, equipment and policies.
In the second phase, a conceptual framework was derived from the results of phase 1, using the activities prescribed by Dickoff, James and Wiedenbach (1968). In the third phase, an educational programme was developed from of the findings of the previous phase. The Vicon project (2010) explains a programme as a plan of action for achieving something. The educational programme was implemented and evaluated and adjusted according to recommendations made. The feedback session with participants would indicate that their responses to the programme were positive, and they mentioned that the programme was indeed needed. The intention and hope are that the educational programme will help caregivers for the elderly to be competent and provide quality care.

Keywords: *Caring; Elderly; Caregiver; Old Age Home; Programme; Evaluation.*

1. Introduction

The article was extracted from the authors study "Caregiving in oldage homes in Windhoek, Rehoboth: A practice –orientated enquiry into care giving education. Furthermore, there is the perception that when the elderly admitted to institutions such as old-age homes, they are well cared for. An old-age home is an institution where 24-hour care for residents is provided by church organisations, social services, voluntary organisations and private individuals. The elderly may have their own rooms, or they may share, and they might require help with bathing, washing, toileting and eating Stoyle, (1992) (in Dolon & Holt, 2000).
In Namibia, an article was published in a local newspaper which reflects the concerns and doubts of the skills and knowledge of caregivers within the family of an elderly person cared for in an old-age home. The article draws attention to caregivers who, it is said, were unable to diagnose or identify a fractured leg (femur), which resulted in an elderly person's death. This incident and similar occurrences justify an investigation, evaluation and study of this issue (Die Republikein, July 2002). A possible solution for

this problem is to provide formal training and education for these caregivers. Caring for the elderly is risk-laden. Therefore, this type of work should be done by persons who have the insight, knowledge, skill and integrity to act responsibly and humanely so that the elderly person is safe in their care at all times (Clarke, 2008).
Statistics in Namibia show that in 2001 there were 122,195 elderly people National Planning Commission (2001). The problem of an increasing aged population is highlighted by the World Health Organization, which estimates that today worldwide there are around 600 million persons aged 60 years and over, by the year 2025, this total will double and will reach virtually two billion by 2050- the vast majority of them in the developing world. (World Health Organization, 2002).The Encarta Dictionary (2009) explains an elderly person as someone past middle age and approaching the later stages of life.
Evaluation can be described as an act of appraisal and is essential to measure the effectiveness of goal attainment Dreyer, Hattingh & Lock, (1997) (in Netshikweta, 2009). In the research, the educational programme was developed and implemented, which provid-

ed exposure for recipients/caregivers to the content of the programme. Programme evaluation was thus possible, as recipients could measure its success based on how well the programme breached the gap between their experiences of caregiving, and the scientific knowledge presented to them.

2. Purpose of the evaluation after the programme

The purpose of evaluating the programme was to determine whether the planned action met the recipients' (caregivers') needs and whether the programme was appropriate for the caregivers in rendering care to the elderly Dreyer et al., (1997) (in Netshikweta, 2009) and to identify problems.

3. Discussion of the evaluation

Educational Evaluations the process of characterizing and appraising some aspects of an educational process. There are two common purposes in educational evaluation, which are at times in conflict with another (Greenberg, 2000).

Evaluation was done three months after the implementation on 20 July 2010, at the Ouderust oord old age home hall.

The Tabitha old age home caregivers notified the researcher the morning of the evaluation that they could not attend the discussion owing to their duties. Accordingly, the researcher agreed to evaluate them on 27 July 2010.

3.1. Focus group discussion

Subsequently, focus group discussions were used as the group was small. According to Gorman and Clayton (2005), a focus group is a small group of 6 to 12 participants guided by a facilitator to observe the attitudes and perceptions relevant to a particular topic. The results of the focus group discussion were used to determine the success of the educational programme.

The participants were welcome to the session and refreshed their memory by previewing the educational programme content.
THEME: 1

Table 1.1: Intrapersonal Functioning, Interpersonal Relationships and Communication.

Intrapersonal functioning, Interpersonal Relationships and Communication	
CONTENT	ACTIVITIES
Communication	• Lecture • Group work: Brainstorming, to define communication • Demonstration on model of communication • Playing a game to emphasise the importance of communication and to point out obstacles in the process of communication • Pictures on various emotions (happy/ sad/ angry and scared) where participants had to recognized the different intensities of these emotions, with the help of the facilitator. • Game of charades was played to demonstrate the power of non- verbal facial expressions and gestures
Self-disclosure	• Johari's Window was explained to participants and feedback requested to personalise this model. • Participants from the same old - aged homes were grouped and requested to write something positive and constructive negative features about another participant. This information is then given to the involved person, who may give feedback on self-disclosure.
Stress and burnout	• Group discussions: Participants were asked to identify triggers which cause stress especially in their work and interpersonal relationships, which were then discussed.
Conflict handling	• Role play to emphasise effective and ineffective handling of potentially difficult situations.

The aim of day two, three and four was to provide caregivers with knowledge and skills on basic practical procedures for effective caring, which links with theme
THEME: 2

Table 1.2: Outline of Implementation of Training of Caregivers in Basic Care.

Training of caregivers to fulfil basic needs of the elderly.	
Session: 2 and 3	
CONTENT	ACTIVITIES
Basic nursing skills • Bed bath • Hair wash • Perineal care • Foot and toe nail care • Beard shave	• Lecture method • practical demonstrations • Simulation • Feedback by participants
Session: 4	
CONTENT	ACTIVITIES
• Mouth wash • Wound care • Medicine care • Nutrition	• Lecture Method • Demonstrations • Feedback by participants • Problem solving

Session: 5

CONTENT	ACTIVITIES
• Cardiopulmonary resuscitation	• Models (dolls) were used for exercise in simulating cardiopulmonary resuscitation to empower participants to handle emergency cases.
• Handling of fractures	• Participants were taught how patients with fractures should be lifted, turned and transferred.
• Management of diseases, epilepsy, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, Parkinson, Alzheimer, Dementia	• Participants were instructed to manage these various conditions, e.g. for hyper and hypo-glycemic clients. I.e. testing blood sugar and to remember to press the emergency bell to call for help.

3.2. How the participants experienced the educational programme

After asking the general question, probing questions were asked which elicited the following responses:

"Die program was inspirerend vir my. Dit hou my op datum en dit het my werk aanbiedinge verbeter" [It was inspiring for me. It keeps me up to date and improves my work delivery.]

Five participants stated: "Ons het baie geleer oor bejaardes en hoe om vir hulle te sorg." [We have learned a lot about old people and how to care for them.]

"Ek dink dit was 'n goeie ding," [I think it was a good thing.]

"Ons het die klasse uitstekend gevind en baie kennis en vaardighede by geleer."
[The classes were excellent and we have gained more knowledge and skills.]

3.3. How the educational programme improved participant's practice

All 12 participants responded positively: "Die program het hulle geleer asook hulle werk uitvoering en het 'n groot verbetering gebring." [The programme taught them to improve their work in order to bring great changes in their work.]

One (1) participant stated: "Die klasse is uitstekend, bou meer kennis op, leer meer van bejaardes. Veral die praktiese prosedures omdat ons werk meer op die versorging is."[The classes were excellent she gained more knowledge on the elderly, for instance, the practicals and the procedures because their work is more on caring.]

Two participants stated: "Die kommunikasie was goed. Het baie gehelp met sommige dinge wat ons al vergeet het. Dit het ons

meer geleer oor die bejaarde se toestand wat agter uitgaan." [The communication was very good; it helps a lot with some of the things that we have forgotten. It teaches us more about the elderly condition that can deteriorate.]

One caregiver who was previously in the police stated after the presentation of the session on communication that it had changed her: "I was so hard; it was only my word, that count and the last word. The workshop on communication taught me to listen to other views." One participant stated: "Die opvoedkundige program het my gehelp om kalmte en geduld te kry." [The educational programme helped her to be calm and patient.]

Another caregiver stated: "I usually don't give a chance to someone to finish talking than I interrupt. I have learned to listen first before answering."

Another participant stated: "Dit het my baie gehelp om met bejaardes te werk en ook om met minder bevoorregtes te help omdat ek self ook 'n doofstomme kind met epilepsie het om te versorg." [The programme helped her to work for the elderly and also to help the disadvantaged because she also care for her dumb, deaf and epileptic child.]

3.4. Problems encountered by participants during the implementation

Some participants experienced the programme as beneficial, despite the fact that too much information was disseminated in too short a time span. One participant stated: "Ons gaan te vinnig deur die lesse, net ons tyd is kort en ek vat nie alles so vining nie anders baie lekker."

[We were going too fast through the lesson, our time is short and I can't absorb everything so quickly. Otherwise it was good.]

The atmosphere during the feedback session was relaxed. The participants' were excited to see each other again, hugging each other and answering spontaneously.

4. Conclusion

It seems that the implementation and the evaluation of the educational programme was a success, based on the comments that the participants made during the focus group discussion. In this focus group, they were asked how they experienced the educational programme, to what extent the programme improved their practices and what were the problems encountered during the implementation of the programme.

The participants responded by stating that the programme was inspiring, kept them up to date, improve their work output and that they have learned a lot from the programme.

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