

Abstract

Original Article

Informal Caregivers' Perceived Needs for Health Education Information and Emotional Support: A Comparison between Acute and Sub-Acute Rehabilitation Settings

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Abstract

Introduction: In-hospital informal care is a common phenomenon in Greece. Health education, information and emotional support needs are important elements for informal caregivers' care. Informal caregiver is defined as a spouse, adult child, other relative, partner or friend who is close to the patient and provides care or help within a wide range of needs.

Aim : To conduct a comparative study on health education, information and emotional support needs between informal caregivers of hospitalized patients in two University Hospital Clinics.

Methodology: Seventy five informal caregivers of hospitalized patients of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and 37 informal caregivers of the Neurosurgery Division participated in this study. The family care for hospitalized patients questionnaire distributed to all participants and data were collected and analyzed using the statistical software SPSS (Version 15.0).

Results: The analysis showed that there is a higher need for health education (0.006) and information (0,019) in the caregivers of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation compared to their counterparts of the Neurosurgery Department, while no differences were observed regarding the needs for emotional support.

Conclusions: During rehabilitation, hospitalized patients' caregivers should be well trained by nurses on fulfilling patients' needs, on detecting signs of disease progression, on expected complications and they need also to be emotionally supported. The need for health education and provision of information was more pronounced at the Rehabilitation clinic. Providing information and training on nursing techniques to inpatients' caregivers can make them more capable on fulfilling patient's needs, while the provision of emotional support may be beneficial for minimizing their burden.

Key words: informal caregivers, health education needs, information, emotional support needs