

that caregivers are given a structured tutorial on how to disburden everyday life. A second but not to be neglected and sometimes more crucial aim of this training is that the caregivers can find a place where they feel confident to ask questions, give and get tips adequate for everyday use. Not only the needs from their loved one are reflected but recognizing one's individual limits and, even more essential, accepting them to maintain a certain level of emotional well-being, requisite for a non-technical but affectionate care is the central ubiquitous theme.

Pangs of remorse, sense of guilt, annoyance, thoughts of renouncing, etc. are shared with the other participants (partner, child or friend) and the obvious new experience of not being accused to overstate or affronted to incomprehension but to find understanding and information exchange.

Using the mixture of theoretical knowledge and practicable hints from professionals and the caregivers, the curriculum includes, after giving a global overview of dementia, the following topics reflecting the problems and challenges people with dementia and caregiver face daily:

- problems with orientation
- communication
- psychological changes
- physiological changes
- nutrition and drinking
- pay attention to one's own physical and mental health
- practical information about care insurance and legal facilities

Certainly our programme does not claim to be complete. But the depiction from the participants of the training programme lets us conclude that knowing about dementia does not make it easier for both, person with dementia and relative caregiver, but the experience of not being alone and getting to know the hitherto unknown feeling to be more confident by acquiring more resources will certainly contribute towards breaking the taboo of the topic of dementia.

Mark the dates!
21st Alzheimer Europe Conference
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P6.2. Moving beyond training: a psychoeducational programme for formal caregivers of elderly with dementia

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Background and objectives: Behavioural and psychological symptoms of people with dementia (BPSD) have been identified to be closely related with high levels of stress and burnout among formal caregivers in residential care settings. Significant intervention training programmes have been conducted in the last decade aiming to teach and train staff in managing BPSD. However, these studies failed to address the psychological distress associated with it. Psychoeducational approaches can provide positive contributions because they respond to both educational and supportive needs of formal caregivers. In this study a psychoeducational programme for formal caregivers of older people with dementia living in residential care facilities was developed, implemented and evaluated.

Methods: A psychoeducational programme was designed based on the literature and on the results from a focus group interview about the perceived needs and expectations of the potential beneficiaries. The programme is brief and structured, consisting of 8 psychoeducational sessions of 90 minutes each, one every two weeks, during 4 months. It was implemented in a residential care facility for 6 female formal caregivers (average age=40 years old, SD=11.92). The impact of the programme on participants' attitudes and care provision was evaluated by a focus group interview, immediately after the programme. The interview was video-recorded, transcribed and submitted to content analysis by 4 independent judges.

Results: Caregivers reported a number of benefits from their participation in the programme, such as: i) acquisition of knowledge about dementia; ii) enhancing person-centred skills for dementia care; iii) application of acquired knowledge in care provision; iv) sharing experiences about the difficulties and the stress related with their job; v) acquisition of problem solving skills and vi) awareness of the importance of relaxation techniques. The lack of time was highlighted as the major limitation to participate in the programme.

Discussion and conclusions: The findings suggest that psychoeducational programs targeted to formal caregivers of people with dementia can have a significant impact on caregivers' sense of mastery and self-competency and, therefore may improve the quality of care. It highlights the need to develop further programmes in residential care facilities that provide formal caregivers not only with information and dementia care skills, but also with support to help deal with stress and burnout associated to dementia care.