

THE NEED FOR PEER SUPPORT WORKERS IN GERONTOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK

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Abstract

Elderly care is not a new topic of debate and has been the subject of numerous studies, both in the medical field and in sociology and social work. This is due to a continuous desire to find new ways to offer the care and attention that beneficiaries need, tailored to their specific situation. Holistic care, which considers both the patient's medical needs and their spiritual, emotional, social, and recreational needs, is essential for improving quality of life and personal development.

The purpose of this research is to study the need for the involvement of peer support workers within the multidisciplinary team providing care for elderly people. Given the novelty of this activity within the field of gerontology, the approach to the topic will be predominantly theoretical.

This article primarily focuses on identifying the gaps in care that are not currently addressed by traditional healthcare professionals, with a particular emphasis on the quality of life of the elderly and their families. We conclude that both patients and their families would benefit from the work of peer support workers, who could serve as a bridge between medical specialists and the patient's family. By partially relieving the burden of care from the family and facilitating holistic care within the elder's living environment, peer support workers can significantly improve the overall well-being of both the patient and their caregivers.

Keywords: gerontology, caring for the elderly, social work, peer support workers.

1. Introduction

Old age, beyond the natural decrease in physical abilities, is often accompanied by medical conditions. Some of these conditions are generated by old age itself, while others are acquired during a person's life. These medical conditions put additional pressure on healthcare specialists and the patient's family. In many cases,