

PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT OF A PERSON-CENTERED CARE MODEL FOR NURSING HOME RESIDENTS WITH DEMENTIA IN THE PROVINCE OF MODENA

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ABSTRACT

People with dementia living in nursing homes require specialized and individualized care. To address this need, a training project was developed for Nursing Homes (RSA) in the Province of Modena, with the aim of concretely and measurably improving the quality of life of individuals with dementia through the adoption of a person-centered care model, while enhancing the skills of healthcare and social care professionals working in these facilities.

The program involved the entire staff of the nursing homes, supported by internal and external facilitators, and was structured into several phases: (1) baseline assessment of environments and care practices; (2) shared definition of improvement goals and specific indicators; (3) plenary training sessions (lectures, clinical case discussions, group work) and on-site training with expert tutors; (4) evaluation of outcomes using pre- and post-intervention assessments with quantitative instruments (Dementia Attitude Scale, DAS; Caregiver Difficulty Scale, CDS; knowledge questionnaires on dementia and BPSD) and qualitative tools (open-ended questions, e.g., “What might be the reasons a person with dementia cannot sleep at night?”).

The results indicate a significant improvement in staff attitudes toward dementia (DAS: $M_{pre} = 110.87$, $M_{post} = 115.46$; $p < 0.001$) and a reduction in perceived difficulties in care (CDS: $M_{pre} = 79.70$, $M_{post} = 69.80$; $p < 0.001$). Item-level analysis showed a slight, non-significant increase in the percentage of correct answers to knowledge questions (from 45% to 53% and from 60% to 68%). In contrast, the mean number of elements reported in open-ended answers significantly increased in several domains: for instance, question 3 ($M_{pre} = 4.76$, $M_{post} = 5.41$; $p = 0.001$), question 4 ($M_{pre} = 3.52$, $M_{post} = 4.03$; $p = 0.005$), and question 5 ($M_{pre} = 3.25$, $M_{post} = 3.90$; $p < 0.001$).

A continuous and personalized training pathway based on person-centered care proved effective in improving staff attitudes and reducing perceived caregiving difficulties, with potential positive effects on the quality of care in nursing homes and on the well-being of professionals. These findings suggest that a multidisciplinary person-centered approach may foster a lasting cultural shift in residential elderly care services, promoting both professional and user well-being, as well as dignity and quality of life for people with dementia.

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