

Nursing based on an interaction model, applied to patients with eating problems and suffering from Parkinson's disease and dementia.

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ABSTRACT.

In this study nursing is regarded as an interaction between patient and caregiver. This interaction consists of two parts; the task that must be done in order to solve the patient's problem, and the relationship between patient and caregiver, that determines the quality of the action.

A theoretical model was constructed and applied to the interaction between caregivers and Parkinsonian and severely demented patients. The model focuses on patients with feeding problems.

Analysis of 23 video-recordings made during the feeding of 15 patients and 55 focused interviews with 45 caregivers revealed that feeding problems belonging to the task aspect, were, on the one hand, of a more constant nature, and on the other fluctuated from meal to meal. A high degree of agreement between different caregivers' experiences concerning problems belonging to the relationship aspect was found.

Aberrant eating behaviour in 24 elderly Parkinsonian patients was assessed by means of video-recordings. The finding revealed problems in handling food on the plate, transporting food into the mouth, manipulating food in the mouth and swallowing. Interpretations were performed based on the impairments of the disease and a theoretical model that had been constructed. This model illuminates how impaired autonomic, perceptive, cognitive, emotional and motoric functions contribute to eating disabilities.

An analysis of 62 caregivers' interpretations (91 interviews) of 23 severely demented patients' behaviour during feeding revealed a phenomenon of vital importance to the interpretations, namely the caregiver's commitment /lack of commitment to the patient, which seemed to determine if the caregiver regarded the patient as a subject or as an object. Sub-categories like knowledge of the patient's disease and personal history, intuition, identification, empathy, generalization, and routinization were found.

The significance of the organization of care to the caregiver-patient interaction during feeding was studied when the organization changed from a task assignment to a patient assignment system. The result showed how feeding problems decreased and how the synchrony of the interaction increased, according to the caregivers' experiences, when the patients were continuously fed by the same caregiver.

The findings in this study emphasize how the interaction between patient and caregiver is influenced by the patient's disease, by the organization in which the patient is cared for, and by the caregiver's philosophy of care and level of knowledge.

Key words: Nursing, interaction, communication, eating problem, feeding, dementia, Parkinson's disease.