

# **Delivering and participating in a psycho-educational intervention for family caregivers during palliative home care: a qualitative study from the perspectives of health professionals and family caregivers**

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**Abstract: Background:** Family caregivers in palliative care have a need for knowledge and support from health professionals, resulting in the need for educational and supportive interventions. The aim of this study is to explore the perspectives of health professionals and family caregivers of delivering and participating in a psycho-educational intervention in palliative home care.

**Methods:** A psycho-educational intervention was designed for family caregivers based on a theoretical framework describing family caregiver's need for knowing, being and doing. The intervention was delivered over three sessions, each of which included a presentation by healthcare professionals from an intervention manual. An interpretive descriptive design was chosen and data were collected through focus group discussions with health professionals and individual interviews with family caregivers. Data were analyzed using framework analysis.

**Results and Conclusions:** From the perspectives of both health professionals and family caregivers, the delivering and participating in the intervention was a positive experience. Consistently, the intervention was regarded as something that could make family caregivers better prepared for caregiving. Health professionals found that the work with the intervention demanded time and engagement from them and that the manual needed to be adjusted to suit group characteristics, but the experience of delivering the intervention was still something that gave them satisfaction and contributed to them finding insights into their work. In order for health professionals to carry out psycho-educational interventions, they may be in need of support and supervision as well as securing appropriate time and resources.

## **Strengths:**

- Examined effectiveness of intervention for both families and healthcare professionals
- Aimed to include caregivers from a variety of settings, of different sexes, and different relations to represent a variety of experiences
- Incorporated a theoretical framework and evidence-based information into intervention and structured design and also allowed for supportive topics and moments to emerge

## **Weaknesses:**

- Possible selection bias - inviting family caregivers based on rigorous staff selection, and voluntary participation may self-select people who are more in need or searching for support
- Home care setting - not as applicable to inpatient, tertiary palliative care settings
- Group leaders were able to take the needs of the group into account during the session - difficult to assess the variations in delivery of the information and therefore evaluate what was the main influence of the participants experience.
- Some interviews with caregivers taken several weeks after the intervention

**Relevance to Palliative Care:** Supporting the family caregivers in palliative care is vital and helpful, early in a palliative diagnosis and throughout the disease trajectory. A psycho-educational group for family caregivers appears to be beneficial for both families and health care professionals. The delicate art and balance of running a structured and informative group, with the ability to adjust the content and delivery to meet the needs of the participants is paramount in the group's effectiveness.