

## **THE EXPERIENCES OF NORTHERN ONTARIO OLDER ADULTS DURING RELOCATION TO LONG-TERM CARE**

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**Brief Description of Research or Project:** Entry to institutional care has been described as one of the most pervasive sources of anxiety marking later life. The purpose of this research study was to advance understanding of the subjective experience of northern Ontario older adults during relocation to long-term care. A qualitative design was selected for analysis of ten semi-structured interviews with cognitively well older adults, 0-8 weeks post relocation. Two dominant themes interpreted from the interview data are offered as constructed, tentative truths: Safety with Strangers: Sharing Space and Place and Waiting for Something Better. **Why is this research important to profile at the Research Day 2014?** Few studies have clarified what relocation and transition is like for the older adult. At the time of my research, no studies were found located in northern Ontario. My interest in conducting this research stemmed from numerous anecdotal reports and much feedback from older adults, their families, and their health providers about the relocation experience. I have encountered these reports within the various nursing roles I have had in my nursing career. Across the continuum of care from the community to the hospital to the longterm care home, I have been told about both the negative and positive experiences of relocating. I have always been concerned that a myriad of issues may, in fact, exist for the older adult. Because I am a northerner, I felt compelled to clarify and better understand this feedback within the population of northern older adults with the hope that such knowledge will ultimately lead to better care. I felt it was important to explore the stress of relocation as well as the quality of life afterwards. Therefore Relocation Stress and Quality of Life theory provided the theoretical starting point for the study and contributed to initial analysis and interpretation of the findings As an advocate for the older adult, I felt compelled to view the relocation experience through their lens, hear their voice, and share their experiences. This research study is well suited to LTC Research Day 2014 as it addresses transitional issues at the subjective level. My findings are both sobering and reassuring.