



Poster # 32

Title of poster: Advance Care Planning: A Qualitative Study with Families of Deceased Cognitively Impaired Older Adults: Study Design

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Abstract

There is an increasing awareness and discussion of issues at the end of life, including the concept of advance care planning (ACP). ACP is a process through which older adults with capacity can plan in advance for their preference for care if they become incapable of making decisions for themselves. While ACP is important to all older adults, irrespective of age or health status, it is of particular salience for those with diagnosed cognitive impairment. A systematic review of the effectiveness of ACP interventions for cognitively impaired older adults provided evidence of reduced inappropriate hospital admissions and reduced healthcare costs (Robinson L. , et al., 2012). The current study aims to provide the first step in understanding reasons cognitively impaired older adults choose to engage in aspects of ACP by exploring ACP as a multi-component complex process. The purpose is then to explore not only which aspects of ACP occur in families of cognitively impaired older adults, but also the reasons why these decisions are made. The specific research questions are: 1) when and how do cognitively impaired older adults and their families receive information about ACP and its relation to cognitive impairment; 2) in which aspects of the ACP process do they engage, and why; and 3) what is the role of ACP in family members' perceptions of the deceased's quality of death. Interpretive description (ID) will be used as the method of analysis in the current study as it addresses the limitations in traditional schools of qualitative analysis (Thorne S. , 2008). A key tenant of this approach involves grounding the research in both the literature as well as the practical knowledge gained from experience. The ID method focuses on practical applications, particularly the clinical utility of research to guide best practice. Family members of deceased older adults who were cognitively impaired prior to death will be recruited with an initial sample size of 15. Open-ended questions will be used in focus groups and individual interviews to guide discussion. Data collection and analysis will occur concurrently with the principle investigator immersing herself fully in the data prior to coding and looking for broad themes as a first step in the analysis. Data analysis is inherently flexible, allowing for shifting of data construction and an openness to changing themes as new understandings of relationships are elicited. Constant comparative analysis will be used to compare each identified theme with all the other themes to identify commonalities and patterns (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Following completion of the initial stages of data analysis, participants will be invited to attend an additional focus group where the principle investigator will present her provisional findings (Thorne, Reimer Kirkham, & MacDonald-Emes, 1997). Participants will be asked to discuss their reactions to the themes

brought forward by the principle investigator, emphasizing how these themes fit with their experiences and understandings of the research questions. Participants will provide feedback on the initial themes that will be used to refine these themes in later stages of data analysis.

