An Evaluation of Met and Unmet Needs, Carer Burden and Barriers to Accessing Services amongst Family Carers of People with Dementia - A Qualitative Study

INTRODUCTION

The increasing prevalence of dementia means that many people are taking on a caring role for someone with dementia, often on a full time basis. Few studies have explored the needs of carers in Ireland, and in particular there is little literature on the barriers to accessing services.

METHODOLOGY

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with six family care givers of people with moderate and advanced dementia who were identified through snowball sampling. A framework analysis, with stages of familiarization, identification of thematic framework, indexing, mapping, and mapping and interpretation, was undertaken.

RESULTS

Five major themes emerged from the textual data: information, money, limited service availability, support and transport. The primary reported barrier to service use among carers was the lack of information received at time of initial diagnosis. Once diagnosed, adequate support is not seen as available. Carers reported isolation and uncertainty about what was available to support them. Financial burden resulted from the family member’s dementia, and resulted in carer stress and in most cases limited access to services.

CONCLUSIONS

Information emerged as the key theme. Carers want information and it is necessary to have information, such as a diagnosis, in order to access services. Consideration needs to be given to approaches to the diagnosis and disclosure of the diagnosis and the signposting of services.

PRESENTED

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