Rashandra Fisher Laws (Fall 2014)

“Evaluating the Perceptions of Quality of Life in Informal Caregivers Caring for Hospice Patients”

Abstract

Maintaining or improving quality of life for informal caregivers is important as they endure the burden of providing care to terminally ill loved ones on a daily basis. Caregivers are at a greater risk for depression, deteriorating physical health, financial difficulties, and premature death than demographically similar non-caregivers (Demiris et al., 2010). The goal of this capstone project was to determine the effectiveness of the creativity, optimism, planning, and expert information (COPE) intervention, which address specific needs of the family and caregiver.

Twenty informal caregivers completed the Quality of Life (QoL) Index tool, which measured their perceptions of five different domains related to quality of life. The domains were (a) overall quality of life, (b) health, (c) social, (d) psychological, and (e) family. Ten informal caregivers were provided with the routine services given by the hospice agency. The remaining informal caregivers were given the routine services and care in addition to the services in the COPE intervention. At the end of 30 days, all 20 informal caregivers completed the QoL tool again to determine if there was any difference in their perceptions of the five quality of life domains. There was an increase in the scores in both groups; however, the scores increased more with the informal caregivers who received the COPE intervention. Although the scores increased in both groups, the increase was not statistically significant because of the small number of informal providers used in this project. In addition, the verbal responses by the informal caregivers who received the intervention showed positive outcomes.