Session 9060 (Poster)

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE AND OTHER DEMENTIAS II

COLLECTION OF DATA ON PERSONS LIVING WITH DEMENTIA WHO GO MISSING: FIRST RESPONDER PERSPECTIVES
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While it is commonly cited that 60% of persons living with dementia (PLWD) wander, it is unclear whether this number reflects global contexts. Population aging has created a pressing need for the development of programs to mitigate the risks of PLWD from getting lost and going missing. Such programs would require a national strategy for the collection and integration of data on missing incidents involving this population. This study is a first step to inform such a strategy. The purposes were to: 1) identify approaches to data collection on missing persons incidents involving PLWD among Canadian police and search and rescue (SAR) organizations; 2) describe the foreseeable challenges associated with developing a national data collection strategy. We used generic qualitative description to generate data with fifteen key informants. Virtual semi-structured interviews were completed and transcribed verbatim. Content analysis and trustworthiness strategies guided analysis and rigor. Our findings indicate that police and SAR organizations collect a multitude of data pertaining to missing incidents involving PLWD. However, there is a lack of standardization in data collection, entry and analysis. Privacy legislation, limited resources, and incompatible data management systems pose challenges to data sharing and interoperability. Underreporting of missing incidents to police results in an underestimation of missing incidents. An intersectoral, uniform approach to data collection would enable the storage, analysis and comparison of national data. Accurate data on critical wandering can inform prevention, search strategies, resource allocation and effectiveness of programs.

DEMENTIA CARE MANAGEMENT: SOCIAL CAPITAL FOR PERSONS WITH DEMENTIA THAT LIVE ALONE
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Social connections are critical for healthy aging (Ahn et al., 2020). Consistent findings in research for persons with dementia that live alone show that a natural support network is the gold-standard for success, as social capital enhances well-being. Therefore a community-based intervention was piloted as part of a national ‘special populations grant’ in partnership with the local Meals-on-Wheels program. Dementia care management provided by graduate social work interns sought to provide weekly supportive contacts. Quantitative data was collected at baseline and following the program through administration of standardized measurement tools for “thriving” and for “dementia quality of life.” The sample to date (N=33) consists of a majority being white females (82.4%), with additional participants expected as the remaining enrolled complete the program. These early “completers” do not show significant changes in their specific “surviving to thriving” domains, yet they do report greater perceptions of quality in their life as a whole following the dementia care management intervention when comparing post data to their baseline (Chi Square 18.95, p=0.004). To date this intervention continues to be studied and suggests a positive impact is likely for older adults with dementia that live alone, as well as for the communities where they reside.

DEVELOPING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES TO PROMOTE DEMENTIA E-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES FOR COVID-19 AND BEYOND
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People living with dementia (PLWD) and their caregivers often face barriers to education, support, and services that can improve their health and quality of life. Information technology (IT) has been suggested as a solution to overcoming such barriers, though the development of evidence-based IT for dementia care is still developing. This project gathered stakeholder (e.g., providers, caregivers) perspectives on the development of a proposed IT solution to support community asset mapping that would allow families to self-assess their dementia-related service needs, educate them about available services, and link them with services they need in their community. This proposed IT would create a dementia resource database that relies on crowdsourced data from community stakeholders as well as relevant data mined from existing sources (e.g., CMS certified nursing home data). As part of the planning process, this project conducted qualitative interviews with providers and caregivers in four metro areas in Alabama and their surrounding rural communities to learn more about the content and features that stakeholders perceive as being most effective for the proposed technology. Stakeholders also discussed their experience of utilizing IT solutions during the COVID-19 pandemic to promote access and continuum of care when barriers to service intensified. Thematic findings provide detail on: 1) motivating factors among stakeholders to contribute crowdsourced data that support community members affected by dementia; 2) potential barriers to implementing IT for dementia support, based on experiences with IT use during COVID-19; and 3) how stakeholders envision IT to better connect community members with needed services.