“Diversity and Dementia: Interventions for Reducing Family Caregiver Stress”

Chinese Caregivers

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Overview

- Demographics
- Chinese family values related to caregiving
- Chinese conception of dementia
- Culture-specific factors contributing to caregiving stress
- Differences between Chinese & Caucasian caregivers
- Designing interventions
- Applying Interventions
- Clinical case
Percent Distribution of the Asian Population in California by Type: 2000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2001

Chinese 25.7%
Filipino 24.1%
Asian Indian 8.3%
Korean 9.1%
Vietnamese 11.7%
Japanese 7.6%
Other Asian 10.5%
Where do Chinese live in the U.S.?

Source: U.S. Census 2000

10 largest Chinese American communities (% population)
1. Hawaii
2. California
3. New York
4. Massachusetts
5. New Jersey
6. Washington
7. Maryland
8. Nevada
9. District of Columbia
10. Illinois

10 states with largest Chinese populations
1. California (980,642)
2. New York (424,774)
3. Texas (105,829)
4. New Jersey (100,355)
5. Massachusetts (84,392)
6. Illinois (76,725)
7. Washington (59,914)
8. Hawaii (56,600)
9. Pennsylvania (50,650)
10. Maryland (49,400)
General Asian/Chinese demographics

- Chinese –largest Asian group in the U.S. (2.7 million or 20% of all Asian populations), followed by Filipinos and Asian Indians

- 49% of Asians live in the western part of U.S.

- 88% API’s were either foreign-born or had at least one foreign-born parent.

- ~50% of Asian-born populations live in LA, NY, and SF
Chinese family values related to caregiving

Filial piety 孝 = child (子) supporting aged (老)

✓ Absolute obedience to parents
✓ Family’s/Parents’ interests above individual’s
✓ Women faithfully serve her in-laws, particular mother-in-law.
✓ Interpersonal harmony over individual expression
✓ Provide for the parents, materially & spiritually
✓ Venerate the aged
✓ Oldest son and wife take care of aged parents
✓ Rear son for old age
Chinese conception of dementia

- Normalization; avoid stigmatization
- Mental illness: ‘crazy’ & ‘catatonic’
- Retribution for sins of ancestors or family’s bad karma/feng shui
- Fate (external locus of control)
- Regression to Childhood
- Trad. Chinese medicine:
  - Problems with
    - Kidney
    - Mind/Heart
    - Turbid phlegm
    - Blood stagnation
Culture-specific factors contributing to caregiving stress

**Personal/psychological**
- Attribution style
- Coping style
- Acculturation level
- Communication style
- Caregiver involvement
- Undisclosed emotional distress

**Familial/Social/External**
- Family hierarchy
- Migration stress
- Role reversal
- Urbanization/Industrialization
The Sandwiched Caregivers
Source: AARP Multicultural Survey, 2001

Chinese
- Provide intergenerational care and across the oceans
- More time-consuming forms of care than any other race
- More guilt about not caring enough than any other race
- Expect children to continue caring for elders

Caucasian
- Most likely to live with only one spouse
- Least likely to provide care for elders
- Least likely to have guilt
- Least likely to feel stressed
- Report a more positive outlook
- Not likely to expect care from children
Differences between Chinese & American female caregivers

- Chinese CGs reported fewer depressive symptoms than Caucasian CGs despite using similar coping strategies (Shaw et al., 1997)
- Daughters-in-law and spouse CGs reported much higher GDS-S scores than adult children CGs (Fuh et al., 1999)

- Higher suicide rate among foreign-born elderly immigrants
- Less likely to be identified as having depression by service providers
- Less likely to seek and utilize services (Snowden and Cheung, 1990)
Designing Interventions for Chinese caregivers

- Draw on cultural strengths
- Psychoeducational approach
- Build trust/alliance
- Help acknowledge psychological distress
- Assess undetected depression
- Assume multiple roles
- Assess non-caregiving stressors
- Remove practical barriers
Applying culturally appropriate interventions

- Manage problem behavior of care-recipient
- Gentle assertiveness training
- Help communicate with family for help
- Gentle assertiveness training
- Regular relaxation exercise
- Incorporate pleasant events into daily routine
- Plan for the future
Assessment of Family Caregiving Stress—Example of a Wife Taking Care of Husband

Migration
Adjusting to a new culture

Age of migration
Language
Ethnic density of neighborhood
SES
Education

Developmental tasks

Chinese values
Family values
Health beliefs

e.g., Expressing negative thoughts and emotions to children is culturally inappropriate

Role reversal

Children

Coping style

Mother of an older person with dementia

Inadequate social Support system

Blocked from access to health care system

CAREGIVING
for husband

Generational conflicts
Empty nest syndrome

e.g., Losing memory is part of aging

Chinese values

Individualistic vs. collectivistic

e.g., Rear son for old age

Maintenance of Chinese values

Family values

Health beliefs

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