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Caregivers and Traumatic Brain Injury: A Synthesis of Qualitative Research

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Abstract

Introduction

In the United Kingdom, the value of informal care is estimated at £87 billion per year. Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is set to become one of the major causes of disability by 2020. Published literature reviews, studying the effects of informal caring for an individual with TBI have identified trends in effects on the caregiver such as grief, depression, burden and lower quality of life.

Objectives

1. Describe the experiences of informal caregivers of people who have sustained a traumatic brain injury as an adult.
2. Describe the challenges faced by caregivers.
3. Synthesise experiences to identify themes of importance to this population.

Methods

A keyword search strategy was formulated and an extensive database search has been carried out. The appraisal will include published qualitative studies of informal adult caregivers in the community of either sex of adult relatives of either sex who have sustained a TBI six months or more previously. Articles will be assessed by one reviewer for the inclusion criteria. Included studies will be subject to quality assessment using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Qualitative Assessment and Review Instrument (QARI).

Results

Data will be extracted using the JBI QARI extraction tool. The data will be synthesised using the JBI QARI synthesis tool.

Conclusion

Findings, in terms of themes or metaphors from included studies will be classified in terms of level of support shown in the data to communicate the degree to which the interpretation of the researcher is credible. Categorisation analysis will identify common themes from the findings, enabling the production of a single synthesis. A meta-synthesis will be carried out to produce a single comprehensive set of findings to be used as a basis for evidence based practice. The reviewer will triangulate the appraisal by incorporating structured reflection, and user feedback on identified syntheses.

Contribution to Occupational Therapy Evidence Base

Caregivers' voices about the impact of caring for an individual with TBI will be represented in a synthesis. This will enable occupational therapists to design and provide evidence for client-centred interventions to promote adaptation through occupation.