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Stigma towards dementia in Asian cities: A literature review

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Background: With the rise of ageing population, dementia will soar in the coming decades in Asia. Western studies stated that dementia patients always suffered from stigma; thus they hesitate to seek diagnosis until late stage. Despite the prevalence of dementia, studies concerning the stigma of these people lack in Asia.

Purpose: This article aims to review stigma towards dementia in Asian cities.

Method: Criteria were set for searching among published studies listed in various databases, including MEDLINE, CINCAHL, PsycINFO, ProQuest, and Springer Link. Asian articles investigating the stigma of dementia were included. Articles with the words “dementia”, “Alzheimer’s disease”, “stigma”, “perception”, “attitude”, “stereotype” and “label” in titles and abstracts were identified. Articles with all types of research designs and methods, regardless of whether in English or Chinese, were included. Articles were limited to years between January 2007 and August 2017.

Results: Of the five articles included in this study, four were conducted in Hong Kong and one was from Japan; one was an editorial, one was commentary, two were surveys and one was a cross-sectional study. Samples were recruited from the community. Authors proclaimed that stigma on dementia patients were strong in Asian cities. Older people and people who rarely contacted dementia patients inclined to have stronger stigmatization. In addition, higher level of stigma was associated with lower care seeking intention.

Conclusion: Studies concerning stigma on dementia patients were insufficient in Asian countries. More studies should be conducted to explore condition of stigmatization, so that strategies to reduce stigma can be established.

Biography

W C Wong is the Assistant Professor (Division of Nursing and Health Studies) at the Open University of Hong Kong. She is a Registered Nurse and Registered Psychiatric Nurse. She has worked in several different clinical areas, including acute care unit and psychiatric unit before joining the university. Her research interests include mental health nursing and caregivers’ needs.

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