

49th World Congress on

ADVANCED NURSING AND NURSING PRACTICE

July 05-06, 2018 Bangkok, Thailand

The performance of caring: The construction of nursing care for people with dementia who live in residential facilities and wander: An interpretive studySarah Cope^{1,2}¹Queensland University of Technology, Australia²University of Canberra, Australia

Specialized dementia care within the residential aged care sector has undergone significant change over the last few decades. One important shift is in the way that aged care providers market their services in offering specialized care including dementia care. The aim of this research was to gain insight into the perceptions and practices around the direct care giving experiences of care staff that provide care in RACFs to people with dementia who wander. This research adopted a social interpretive framework informed by symbolic interactionism and dramaturgy. Data were generated from eleven focus groups conducted with 48 nursing staff at four NSW/Sydney metropolitan RACFs. Data were analyzed using a symbolic inter-actionist lens and open and focused fracturing of data methods of Charmaz (2011). The key finding was that a social order of practice was constructed in the RACFs through participant interpretations of spatial and temporal frames within the RACF setting. The participants used space and time to organize and mediate the ways in which they worked with people with dementia who wander. The construction of care was also positioned within the social order of the organization and the broader regulatory environment. Thus there existed a tension between the organization of care work in the RACF and the person-centered care approach as advocated by the residential care industry and the nursing profession. The research found that the construction of nursing care within a RACF environment is predominantly framed by efficiency measures that privilege linear clock time and habitual practice over the flexibility required for a person-centered approach to caring for people with dementia who wander.

Biography

Sarah Cope has received her Doctoral degree in 2016 from Queensland University of Technology, Dementia Collaborative Research Centre: Carers and Consumers (DCRC:CC), Australia. She is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Canberra where she enjoys the enthusiasm and sprite from students for the nursing profession. She holds special interest in dementia care, residential aged care gerontology, symbolic interactionism and researching spatial and temporal realities socially negotiated nursing practice. In her work she has provided expert clinical advice on specific care to support people living with dementia, to carers and health care providers. She is a Registered Nurse and holds a Bachelor of Nursing and a Master of Nursing (Dementia Care).

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