Background and Purpose

After a stroke, family caregivers must quickly learn how to care for stroke survivors at home. In this study, findings from the secondary aim of a NIH-funded intervention project are revealed: problems and successes that adult caregivers expressed in the first year of caring are described.

Methods and Analyses

Trained interviewers used bi-monthly telephone interviews to collect narrative data on what did not go well and what went well in caring. Data were immediately entered into web-based forms, downloaded into QSR N6, and analyzed using Cazurra’s rigorous method of content analysis. The results were drawn to Friedemann’s framework of systemic organization.

Results

- **Demographic profile of caregivers of stroke survivors:**
  - **Gender:**
    - Male 18 25
    - Female 55 78
  - **Age (In Years):**
    - 0 – 10 0 0
    - 11 – 20 2 2.7
    - 21 – 30 9 12.3
    - 31 – 40 14 19.2
    - 41 – 50 16 21.9
    - 51 – 60 25 34.2
    - 61 – 70 14 19.2
    - 71 – 80 6 8.4
    - 81 and over 1 1.4
  - **Race:***
    - African American 29 40.6
    - White not of Hispanic origin 26 35.6
    - Hispanic 12 16.3
    - Asian/Pacific Islander 11 15.1
    - Black not of Hispanic origin 1 1.4
    - Grade School 5 6.8
    - High School 29 39.7
    - 2-year College 6 8.4
    - 4-year College 7 9.6
    - Graduate School 3 4.1
- **Caregivers (n = 73):**
  - Trained interviewers used every other week telephone interviews for 1 year to collect narrative data.
  - Data were analyzed using Colaizzi’s rigorous method of content analysis: Extract significant statements and phrases pertaining directly to the phenomenon, problems [and successes] in caring.
  - Cluster meanings into themes.
  - Integrate results into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon.
  - Findings were drawn to Friedemann’s (1995, 2006) framework of systemic organization.

Research Questions

Q1: What are the problems experienced by the caregiver in caring for the person with stroke following rehabilitation treatment?

Q2: What are the successes experienced by the caregiver in caring for the person with stroke following rehabilitation treatment?

- **Problems = 2455 reported:**
  - **Caregiver mean number = 34 problems / year:**
    - Range = 0-15 reported / 2 week period.
  - Three problem themes emerged:
    1) Being frustrated in day-to-day situations (system maintenance in Friedemann’s terms):
      - “There is not enough time in the day to provide care.”
    2) Feeling inadequate and turning to others for help (coherence):
      - “This will be a lifelong struggle with my husband… it’s day by day. I try to make things go, because they can wait.”
    3) Struggling and looking for “normal” in caring (system maintenance in Friedemann’s terms):
      - “Life is never going to be normal again, but it is good. I never thought he would be doing the things that he is doing now. You truly want to value every day.”

- **Successes = 2687 recorded:**
  - **Caregiver mean number = 37 successes / year:**
    - Range = 0-12 successes / 2 week period.
  - Three success themes emerged:
    1) Making it through and striving for independence (system maintenance):
      - “We went to the Ohio State football game with some family, … he had life in his face. It was a neat experience seeing him enjoy it.”
    2) Doing things together and seeing accomplishments in the other (coherence):
      - “We went to the The Ohio State [university football] game. … He had life in his face. It was a neat experience seeing him enjoy it.”
    3) Resolving a new sense of normal and finding balance in life (striving for independence):
      - “I believe that when things happen in life, it either makes you a better person or a worse person and I think he learned a lot from it.”

Discussion

- Initially, caregivers’ problems centered on physical tasks in caring.
- They moved on to deal with behavioral & interpersonal issues of the stroke survivor.
- Feelings of being overwhelmed were exposed & they reached out for support.
- By month 12, they saw some normalcy to their life or realized what normal new was for them (coherence).

Implications

- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.
- Teach caregivers strategies for the tasks of caring and the organization of those tasks.
- Help caregivers assume new behavior patterns and change to meet the responsibilities of caring.
- Teach caregivers ways to maintain their health or well-being.