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Conference Abstract

FAMILY CAREGIVERS' EXPERIENCES DURING TRANSITIONS OUT OF HOSPITAL

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Abstract

Background: Family caregivers play a central yet often under recognized role in ensuring quality and safety during a loved one's transition out of the hospital.

Purpose And Objectives: To explore challenges family caregivers face in assuming post-discharge family caregiving roles.

Methods: A qualitative study was conducted that included 32 family caregivers with family caregivers whose loved one was recently discharged from hospital. A modified Grounded Theory approach was used to analyze the data.

Results: Five central themes related to post discharge caregiving emerged from our analysis: (1) the roles and contributions of family caregivers occur along on a spectrum where the readiness, willingness, and ability of both parties is often dynamic and unrecognized; (2) family caregivers have unique and often incongruent goals from that of the patient; (3) family caregivers feel unprepared and overwhelmed by post-discharge medication reconciliation and management; (4) family caregivers need role clarification and encouragement to assert an identity; (5) family caregivers often assume the responsibility for the sequencing of care plan tasks and anticipating next steps.

Discussion: This study highlights a number of unmet and unaddressed needs among family caregivers. These five themes are being incorporated into a widely disseminated evidence-based model of transitional care.

Keywords

patient centered care, family caregivers, care coordination, care integration, care transition
