

Heart work: A thematic analysis of compassion in long-term care

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BACKGROUND

- It is important to build an understanding of how compassion is understood and enacted within long-term care (LTC) environments in Canada using a participatory action research approach

RESEARCH TOPIC

- To explore perceptions about compassion when delivering palliative care from the perspective of residents, family members, and healthcare providers in LTC
- To identify potential facilitators and barriers associated with providing compassionate care to residences in Canadian LTC settings

METHODOLOGY

- We led 19 focus groups with a total of 117 individuals at participating LTC sites in one of four Canadian provinces
- Thematic analysis of the recorded focus group discussions was used to identify patterns that shed light on various components of the larger concept of compassion

KEY FINDINGS

- Two themes emerged from the data, each with five sub-themes:
 - 'Conceptualizing Compassion in LTC': outlines an understanding of compassion found to be congruent with previous models
 - 'Organizational compassion': outlines the contextual factors associated with offering compassionate care within LTC settings

CONCLUSION

- Compassion is an under-recognized, yet critical, element of personal and professional relationships formed in LTC that are often bound by systemic barriers
- Future research should focus on recognizing the complexity of factors that influence LTC health-care providers' ability to offer compassionate, patient-centered care